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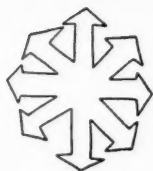
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THREE COMMENTS ON THE NEAR FUTURE OF MANKIND

It seems impossible to foresee man's future. However, we do see clearly that the past determines our present in many realms: language, concept of the world, religion, science, law. Moreover, certain biological and physiological conditions appear to be so characteristic of the human species that we would not really be concerned with humanity if men managed to free themselves of these conditions.

Thus the present largely determines the future, and even today, unwittingly, we are determining for some centuries the living conditions of our progeny. We would like to show here, by three examples, that one can already define and foresee such orientations and to show what profound changes these determinations imply for tomorrow's humanity, in relation to its traditional counterpart.

Such research can also teach us what is really important in the major decisions of the present world and what is much less so, no matter what we may think. Thus, by being more aware of the distant but ineluctable

Translated by William J. Harrison.

Three Comments on the Near Future of Mankind

consequences of our present decisions, we should, perhaps, be able to inflect them and take the measures necessary for man to be able to avoid, or at least diminish, their inconveniences, without altogether renouncing their benefits.

The system I have followed in making these inquiries is simple, and I hope good in principle: *to identify the phenomena which have a long-term development*, which by reason of their own nature have a duration measurable in *centuries*, and which, unless altered by catastrophe on a world-wide scale, would not deviate over a period of twenty or thirty years. This method, then, must, a priori, keep me from divination and prophecy and hold me to the level of experimental science. It could easily occur, however, that I make grave errors in such complex inquiries; that is why I ask the reader to consider these comments as topics of reflection and discussion. Moreover, since forecasting, like all human skills, is the generator of action, and since action is capable of eventually modifying reality, I have no intention of describing here what will be in the year 2200 but, rather, wish to consider the tendencies which would have a chance of prevailing if the unconscious decisions of our age were to remain such and continued to prevail. Furthermore, in order to avoid too strict an interpretation of my thoughts, which would lead to absurd misconceptions, I have deliberately inserted an element of fantasy into the figures which I quote in order to oblige commentators to exercise their critical faculty.

The first of my three examples is extremely important: it touches upon the very nature of humanity and has innumerable consequences for the physical, intellectual, and moral life of each individual. This is the lengthening of the average life span.

The two other examples can be considered to a certain extent as consequences of the first and as reciprocal consequences of each other: these are the problems of the amount of space and of the stabilization of the total population.

I. THE AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Of all human problems, that of the actual length of life is the most important, for, to be a man, one must first be alive. Everyone knows that the advances in hygiene and medicine, on the one hand, and in the level and way of living, on the other, gradually raise the *average* expectation

of life. It is also known that the individual's maximum life span has not been increased, and specialists realize that our present knowledge does not allow us to hope for any success on this point. We will admit, then, with Jean Bourgeois-Pichat that a man of the year 2100 will live, on the average, for eighty years, but no more;¹ if one were able to increase this figure, the problems that we are going to raise here would only be more acute.

This, then, is what is known by every reader of this article, and each can deduce its numerous consequences in many fields. However, this phenomenon has been studied thus far much more with respect to great numbers than to the life of each individual; furthermore, as soon as one wishes to specify these consequences, precise details, which we did not possess until recent months, become necessary. To envisage the future, it is indispensable to have some reasonably clear knowledge of past evolution; what, then, were the former conditions of humanity, the conditions in the course of which our moral norms, philosophical principles, and legal rules were formulated? Still more specifically, what was "the demographic calendar of the average man" with the average life expectancy of former times, and what will it be when the average life span is eighty years?

As the reader will see, this is how we refer to the over-all compilation of dates and periods of time of the essential stages of life: age at marriage, number and dates of birth of children, age at which a man loses his parents, number and date of bereavements, etc.

Now very little was, and still is, known on these questions. However, the (French) National Institute of Demographic Studies permitted me to attempt an incursion into this realm, the general results of which I shall now present (see Table 1).²

The traditional expectation of life for our ancestors until about the year 1800 was not of a life "biographically complete." The missing information is becoming calculable through the systematic analysis of the civil registers of certain parishes.³

1. J. Bourgeois-Pichat, "Essai sur la mortalité biologique de l'homme," *Population*, No. 3 (1952).

2. J. Fourastié, "Recherches sur le calendrier démographique de l'homme moyen de la vie traditionnelle à la vie 'tertiaire,'" *Population*, No. 3 (1959).

3. E.g., E. Gautier and L. Henry, "La Population de Crulai, paroisse normande," I.N.E.D. *Cahier*, No. 33, 1958.

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TABLE 1

SOME PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "DEMOGRAPHIC CALENDAR" OF THE AVERAGE MAN AND WOMAN IN WESTERN EUROPE

	ABOUT 1730		TODAY		ABOUT 2000	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Life expectancy at birth (e_0)	25	25	72	74	77	78
Infant mortality per 1,000 born alive	250	230	22	20	11	10
Average age at marriage	27	25	26	24	26	24
Number of persons per 1,000 born alive reaching this age	425	440	932	952	984	989
Median age at death of married persons	51	51	72	77	79	81
Average length of marriage	17		39		46	
Median length of marriage	15		41		48	
Average number of births per marriage (France)	4.1		2.3		..	
Average age of average child at the death of the first deceased of his two parents	14		40		55	

From these studies it would appear that the average life, or the expectation of life, at birth, was of the order of twenty-five years in France at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. For certain particularly sorely tried generations this figure could, in Old Europe, drop to the region of twenty years. *It is these numbers—twenty years, twenty-five years—which give full significance to the presently foreseeable figure: eighty years.*

In the past, out of one thousand children born alive, an average of about 430 or 440 reached the age of marriage; tomorrow it will be 985. Taking into consideration celibacy (which accounts for about ten per cent of mankind today, as it did in the past), an average of 4.5 children per household, with expectation of life $e_0 = 25$, was necessary to maintain the total number of the population.⁴ Tomorrow 2.2 children per household will suffice.

The average ages at first marriage have varied little since 1700, at least in France: they stood at twenty-seven years for men and twenty-five for women; today they are twenty-six and twenty-four. Today, as in the past, one marries *for life*, but in those days this life together lasted seventeen years on the average; only one household in two reached its fifteenth wedding anniversary. Tomorrow, life together will last for forty-six to forty-eight years.

4. The symbol e_0 indicates the life-expectancy at birth, that is to say, at age 0. One can, indeed, calculate the life expectancies at different ages, which one then indicates by e_{10} , e_{20} , etc. (average number of years to live for those reaching the ages of 10, 25, etc.).

In former times it was at the age of fourteen, if he reached it, that the average child saw the first of his parents die; tomorrow it will be at the age of fifty-five. We are naturally pleased with this but must point out the following: with $e_0 = 80$, more than half the private riches of a nation will belong to men and women over seventy-five years old.

Formerly, parents died before having completed their children's education; tomorrow, supposing that the ages at first marriage remain what they are today, a normal couple will live for twenty or twenty-five years after the marriage of their youngest child.

At the end of the seventeenth century in France, but probably in the rest of the world as well, the life of the average father of a family, married for the first time at the age of twenty-seven, could be summarized thus: born into a family of five children, he had only seen half of them reach the age of fifteen; he, like his father, had had five children, of whom only two or three were living at the time of his death.⁵

This man, living, on the average, until the age of fifty-two—an attainment which was fairly uncommon, ranging him in the venerable ranks of old men—had (without speaking of uncles, nephews, and first cousins) known an average of nine persons of his immediate family, among whom there was only one grandparent (the other three having died before his birth), his two parents, and three of his children. He had survived two or three famines and, in addition, three or four periods when the price of grain was high because of the poor harvests that came, on an average, every ten years. He had survived his own sicknesses and those of his brothers, his children, his wife, and his parents; he had known two or three epidemics of infectious diseases, not to mention the semipermanent epidemics of whooping cough, scarlet fever, and diphtheria.

Even an imperfect assessment of the human condition will enable one to understand how different an attitude these new increases in life expectancy must bring about in the mind of the average man. In former times death was in the midst of life as the cemetery is in the middle of a village. Since then, death, poverty, and suffering are retreating. They are no longer considered as man's harsh companions, created to constrain him to the spiritual life and to moral progress, but, like accidents

5. The United Kingdom was able to break away from the traditional situation a little earlier; but a half-century, more or less, is not important in this matter.

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and amputations, as unfortunate happenings, contrary to man's true nature and not only to be fought, but minimized and concealed.

The individual legal, philosophical, and moral consequences of this lengthening of the average life span are thus considerable; but the social consequences are no less important. For example, one can neither fully understand the history nor envisage the future of the working class during the past hundred or hundred and fifty years in the countries studied without taking into account the average age of industrial workers.

The results of our research in this area are given in Table 2.⁶ Of course, it only deals with approximate ages—the figures obtained by our calculations were rounded out to the full year because we do not believe that they can be looked upon as accurate to within one year—but, on the other hand, they do appear to constitute an upper limit of the reality, if only because we have adjusted the distribution by age of the *total* population to a *working-class* population which is, in fact, much more subject to early death than is the average.

TABLE 2
AGE OF THE MALE WORKING-CLASS POPULATION IN FRANCE

	TIME					
	About 1750	1801	1851	1901	1954	1975
Average age.....	26	27	30	33	38	42
Median age.....	22	24	26	28	34	39
Age of the youngest.....	10	9-10	10	13	14	16
Number of illiterates per 100 workers	85	75	40	20	5	3

The figures for 1901 are derived from the census of that year and constitute a valuable check on the series, since the earlier figures have been *calculated* by us whereas those for 1901 are *given* to us by research of the time.

The amplitude of aging is such that it cannot be concealed by the inaccuracies of the calculation. It is incontestable that the average age of the workers in our factories was about twenty-seven to twenty-eight in 1830 and is thirty-nine today; it will reach forty-two toward 1975. *In 1830 one worker in two was less than twenty-five years of age; today*

6. Cf. J. Fourastié, "Le Personnel des entreprises, remarques de démographie et de sociologie," *Population*, 1960.

more than one worker in two is over thirty-five years old, and in 1975 one worker in two will be over thirty-nine.

However, these figures summarize the situation of the total French working class, including artisans, and, as we have said before, takes the general mortality into consideration. If we make more accurate investigations, and if we confine ourselves to the poorest fraction of the working population, we should expect still lower average ages. As an example, we have made the calculation for the "common mill-hands" of the town of Mulhouse, whom Villermé accurately describes (1823-34).⁷ These calculations give an average age of twenty-six and a median age of twenty-two.

II. THE PROBLEM OF STABILIZING THE POPULATION

The individual, family, and social consequences of the lengthening of the average life are, then, strong enough to bring into question humanity's underlying behavior, its moral climate, legal institutions, and attitude to life. It is, however, the truly demographic consequences which seem most important; they will have a great bearing upon the future of humanity.

Indeed, the single fact that less than 450 per thousand children born alive reached the average age of marriage in traditional humanity, whereas about 980 will reach the average age of the end of conjugal fecundity in the future, implies for the near future a fundamental tendency toward the rapid increase in the number of living humans on the earth.

I wish to become involved as little as possible in the great debate which, for at least a hundred years, has brought the "Malthusians" and the "Populationists" to grips; a debate which today is more lively than ever and to which the Marxists are adding the weight of the realities of the Chinese. I wish merely to bring forward some unknown or neglected aspects of the problem, after recalling the numbers of the total world population as accepted today: man's appearance on earth goes back five or eight hundred thousand years; four thousand years before Christ humanity still had less than 10 million members; 100 million at the birth of Jesus; and 2,400 million in 1950; there will be 6,300 million

7. Villermé, *Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers des manufactures de coton, de laine et de soie*, XI, 251, 375.

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in the year 2000, according to the projections (mean estimate) of the United Nations' competent service.⁸

I do not wish to deliberate further on the level of stabilization which humanity will reach, nor even on the question of knowing if there will be an effective one, although this seems to demand an affirmative answer. My problem here is to consider the types of humanity which would result from the levels of population. To specify the types implied demands long calculations and developments which go far beyond the framework of this article, and we shall confine ourselves here merely to outlining some aspects of the problem.

First of all, one must make hypotheses on the conditions of habitability of the planet. Of the extreme hypotheses, one is that man does not in any way modify either the physical geography of the world or the climates (Hypothesis A); the other is that man nullifies the inclination of the ecliptic and, generalizing the force of the *cariocas*, fills in a part of the seas by tipping the mountains into them, so that all firm land would become habitable (Hypothesis B). With Hypothesis A there would be scarcely seven billion hectares in which one might live without feeling one's self to be in a state of political exile or scientific experiment; with Hypothesis B there would be fifteen billion hectares.

This being so, in order to characterize the types of humanity cited above, it will be enough to refer to Table 3, which gives figures well known to geographers.⁹

It is easy to calculate the world populations that would result from the extension of the various densities mentioned in this table. I would simply say, to introduce that which I shall develop below, that each of the seven billion hectares of Hypothesis A is already (1960) more heavily populated on the average than was each of the thirty-five million hectares of the France of Louis XV. It may also be noted that in the year 2000 these same seven billion hectares will have a slightly higher population density than that of present-day France (0.9 inhabitants per hectare as against 0.8).

8. The figures published by the United Nations are as follows: high estimate, 6.9 billion; mean estimate: 6.28 billion; low estimate: 4.88 billion (United Nations, *Études de population*, No. 28 [New York, 1958]).

9. The densities of these countries are calculated here on their total geographic area. It is clear that a great part of these lands is only effectively cultivable and habitable in a hypothesis similar to Hypothesis B.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF INHABITANTS PER HECTARE
OF VARIOUS POPULATIONS

Paris, municipal limits, 1959.....	280
Built-up area called "Paris," 1959.....	50
Paris, densest neighborhoods, 1959.....	800
Paris in fourteenth century.....	700
New York, 1950.....	100
Washington, 1950.....	50
London, 1956.....	45
West Berlin, 1957.....	46
Imperial Rome.....	700
Belgium and Holland, 1958.....	3.4
West Germany, 1959.....	2.2
England, 1957.....	2.2
France, 1959.....	0.82
France, 1750.....	0.4
Mainland China, 1957.....	0.65
United States, 1959.....	0.23
U.S.S.R., 1959.....	0.09

As for the densities which the city of New York supports at the present time, they would permit sustaining the life of 700 billion human beings under Hypothesis A and 1,500 billion under Hypothesis B. In the rate of growth foreseen for the years 1950-60 (100 per cent increase in forty years) these numbers would be reached in the year 2200 (Hypothesis A) and in 2310 (Hypothesis B).¹⁰

In comparison one may recall that the total population of the world in 1935 could have been contained in a single town having the density of Paris and a diameter of the distance between Chartres and Rheims.

I do not believe my earlier use of the term "types of humanity" to designate the populations which have resulted, are resulting, and will result from these different densities, to be out of place. Indeed, these figures of density are so widely different that they imply radically opposed kinds of life, themselves engendering intellectual and physical climates without analogy. It is easy to think that, between the situation of man living in a natural milieu such as the France of 1750 and his situation in a vast town with the density of New York and spreading over thousands of kilometers, there are factors in common with the respective situations of animals living in virgin nature and those in our

10. It can be seen that Hypotheses A and B, which are so different from each other in the technical and geographical point of view, differ very little in the demographic viewpoint.

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zoölogical gardens. The least one can say is that the problem is worthy of examination and that we have little time (three hundred years is nothing for adjusting a biological problem) in which to solve it.

What is, in effect, shown by the figures of Table 4, is the relative sensitivity of the phenomenon to moderate or even weak rates of growth and thus the difficulty which mankind will experience in containing it once a certain level has been reached. As is classic in matters of geometric progression, the absolute numbers become so great beyond a certain level that even a very heavy and drastic reduction of the coefficient of growth does not prevent the exorbitance of the absolute increases. From the time of Pericles to the year 2000 the global population will have been multiplied by about 100 (in twenty-five hundred years), but *an equivalent increase* (that is to say, a new multiplication by 100) *would lead to average densities of 100 persons to the hectare*. These same figures show the *small value of solutions of the cosmic type* (passage from Hypothesis A to Hypothesis B as described above, populating the Moon or neighboring planets. These solutions which require vast technical feats would provide only very slight easing of the situation once the number of human beings were in the region of a hundred billion (the surface of the Moon is only one fiftieth of the Earth's, that of Mars a quarter; only Venus is of the same dimension as Earth, but astronomers today admit that it is very inhospitable).

The most striking fact is the opposition which exists between man's natural biological faculties of reproduction and the perspectives opened

TABLE 4
GROWTH RHYTHMS AND DATES AT WHICH, ACCORDING TO THESE RHYTHMS,
POPULATION DENSITY WILL REACH TEN AND ONE HUNDRED INHABIT-
ANTS PER HECTARE OVER SEVEN BILLION HECTARES

Growth Rhythm	No. of Years in Which Pop- ulation Doubles	Date Density Reaches 10 Persons/Hectare	Date Density Reaches 100 Persons/Hectare
Average of six children per family (natural birth rates).....	20	2,050	2,110
Average of four children per family..	31	2,105	2,190
Present world view (median hypoth- esis, United Nations, 1950-2000) ..	40	2,150	2,270
Present rhythm (1953-58) of China.	35	2,135	2,240
Present rhythm (1950-58) of the United States.....	47	2,180	2,320
Average of three children per family.	65	2,235	2,420
Present rhythm (1955-59) of France.	105	2,370	2,715

by the raising of his average life expectancy to eighty years. The increase noted from Pericles' day to our own has been achieved with natural fecundity (about 4.1 or 4.2 children, on average, to the average marriage, which corresponds to an average of about six children per complete family).¹¹ Now, in the future almost all families will be complete families. Moreover, the advances in medicine, in the interest of the individual, reduce and will reduce the incidence of congenital sterility. Natural fecundity would, then, produce at least six children per average family. Assuming a constant rate of celibacy, about ten per cent, a reproduction rate of 1.65 would double the number of the potential parents in twenty years, which would lead humanity into a rate of growth twice as rapid as the present and, beginning with the present population of three billion, would mount to 700 billion in a century and a half.

I say this only to show what would be produced in the near future by the *extension of the millenary birth rate*, which demographers call the "natural or spontaneous birth rate." If one assumes that this is excluded, one assumes that the sexual behavior of present-day and future mankind differs, and will differ, greatly from his natural behavior. Table 4 shows that, *even with the birth rate greatly reduced, the long-term increases remain large*. Notably, an increase of 100 per cent is produced in sixty-five years by this rate of an average of three children per family, a rate which seems very restrictive from the individual and family point of view in a wealthy society where the problems of patrimony are hardly posed; where full employment, the reduction of professional work, comfort in the profession, and abundance of leisure more or less relieve parents of the worry of *establishing* their children; where, finally, the risk of death, suffering, sickness will be reduced to very low degrees in both young and adult years.

However, the essential object of Table 4 is to point out that *the demographic problem will become one of the great problems of the near future of mankind*. It may be conceded that it will become acute in the region of densities of ten inhabitants to the hectarer (seventy billion people); now, even with the rate of growth of "highly developed countries," like the United States, this point of great sensitivity would be reached at a time when the great-grandson of my grandson would

11. A complete family is a family in which both parents are living at least until the mother reaches the age of 50.

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normally be alive. Contrary to general opinion, there is seen to be little difference, from the point of view of great numbers and the dates of their attainment, between the birth rates of the United States and of the whole of the rest of the world today (only thirty years delay in reaching the density of ten and fifty years for the density one hundred); between even the Chinese rhythm and that of America, the delay in reaching the density of ten is only one of forty-five years! Only a very much slower rhythm, such as that of France today, substantially postpones the attainment of very great numbers while keeping them astonishingly near if seen from the point of view of millenary mankind.

It will also be noted that what some generations have done, other generations can undo. By limiting to one the number of children per household a human race would be found, after the death of the parents, reduced in the ratio of ten to four and one-half; perhaps our descendants will have recourse to spasms of this kind, that is to say, to successive pulsations of growth and contraction, each phase summoning up contrary reflexes. But it is seen that, even through such rigorous, only-child rationing, four generations would be required to return from a density of ten to the density of one-half which was that of France in 1750; and, as will be suggested below, economic and social conditions seem to forbid—or at least to render extremely perilous—such deflations, or even much more gradual deflations, to mankind.

Table 4 tends, then, to define the types of humanity which would prevail in the near future if the marriage and fecundity rates observed in certain territories at this time found themselves made general throughout the whole world. Supposing that at a certain date everybody became of the opinion that it was necessary to reach a stationary level of population at a fixed number and date, it does not appear that man would even then be secure from serious difficulties on this account. Indeed, man has never experimented with the situation as a stationary population with raised life expectancy, and the little we know of this situation does nothing to prevent the raising of serious anxieties. We know, in fact, that demographic stagnation has characteristic and grave economic, social, and moral effects; Alfred Sauvy has described them with precision.¹² In such a population the age *pyramids* would become almost *rectangles*; there would be almost as many persons aged sixty to eighty as there were children and adolescents under twenty years of age.

12. A. Sauvy, *Théorie générale de la population*.

More particularly, the decisions that limited the number of the population to a fixed figure would have to be deliberate, whereas *traditional humanity never knew any but unconscious mechanisms in this area.*

III. THE QUANTITY OF SPACE

The millenary situation of mankind is, in fact, very distinct; as already mentioned, it was hygiene and the standard of living which determined the death-rate and that this "natural" death rate counterbalanced the natural fecundity to the point of not allowing any increase, or only a very slight one. However, it is clear that, even if hygiene and medicine had been improved, the traditional standard of living would, in the past, have sufficed to close the dam on demographic expansion. Indeed, as our ancestors well knew, it was food which limited the population by the pitiless rigor of famine. The very slow advance in agricultural techniques thus had as a corollary a very slow increase in the total population. In the eighteenth century two hectares of average land in a temperate climate were still needed to feed one man. *Forty million arable hectares in France fed twenty Frenchmen.*¹³

Today, with already usable (I do not say used) techniques, two hectares can nourish, more decently than in the past, not merely one man, but from ten to twenty, and tomorrow it will be thirty or forty. This would permit population densities per hectare of *about the degree of present-day London or Berlin.*

The unconscious and brutal, but effective, mechanism which would limit the proliferation of the human species as it does all animal species,

13. "The man worth forty crowns: How many *arpents* do you think there are in France? —The geometrician: One hundred and thirty million, of which almost half [55 million hectares] are (sterile). . . . The land with a good yield could be reduced to seventy-five million square *arpents*; but let us count it as eighty million. . . . How much do you estimate every *arpent* yields on an average, in the average year, in wheat, all sorts of grain, wine . . . cattle, fruit, wool, silk, milk, oil: . . . The geometrician: If each produces twenty-five pounds it is a lot" (Voltaire, *L'Homme aux quarante écus*, in *Contes et Romans*, III ["Les textes français"] (Paris: L'Association Guillaume Bude)), pp. 16 ff.

Twenty-five pounds represented at the time the average price, over a long period, of a *quintal* of wheat. The total production of France's soil was thus the equivalent of 80 million quintals of wheat, say, 4 quintals per head of the population (one kilogram per day and per person). It can be understood that *nourishment* was close to its limit. For a closer examination of the question see my book *Machinisme et bien-être*, pp. 140 ff.; in English, *The Causes of Wealth* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960), pp. 142 ff.

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that of sustenance, has, then, been effaced. Our problem is to discover if another will be substituted.¹⁴

Let us try to deal with the problem from the point of view of the amount of space, leaving to other studies, or other investigators, the task of examining it under the numerous and no less important aspects which it necessarily entails.

Man occupies, uses, or consumes space—geographical localities on the surface of the earth. Schematically, we shall say that these localities are necessary to him in order to satisfy four types of need: needs for agricultural produce necessary for his nourishment; needs for manufactured products; needs for shelter; and, finally, needs for movement (exercise, strolling, sport, tourism. Let us call these four "quantities of space" needed by the average man h_1 , h_2 , h_3 , and h_4 , respectively. Let us then observe that h_1 and h_2 are easy to measure with accuracy with the aid of the usual statistics; h_3 is already a little more nebulous; and h_4 is almost impossible to calculate.

The important fact, however, is that in comparing present-day with traditional life it is easily observed that the advance in production techniques and its consequences, the improvement in the way of life and in the standard of living, have as a result the constant reduction of h_1 and, on the other hand, the increase in h_3 and h_4 . As for h_2 , it appears that it has to reach a certain maximum and then no longer increases.

As has been said above, for the average man of the eighteenth century, h_1 was about two hectares of good ground in a temperate climate; h_2 was very small, the plants, factories, and artisans' workshops representing very little at the time; h_3 was very small for the average man, with people crowding themselves four or five into a room sixteen meters square (but, it is noteworthy, on the order of one to two hectares for the wealthy classes—châteaux, parks, gardens—an essential phenomenon on which we shall dwell below); finally, h_4 was small as a need, the low standard of living and the mediocre techniques depriving the

14. Of course, discussion is usual to establish whether the problem of food is effectively solved or whether, on the contrary, the underdeveloped countries are not going toward new famines; but this has been debated very often, and I have no new items to add to the dossier. That is why I prefer to deal with the following problem: *Supposing* the problem of food to be solved, are there other unconscious and coercive mechanisms to limit the number of human beings? It does appear to me to be established that the problem of food is about to be effectively overcome, that is to say, taken over two or three centuries (especially if one thinks about the *cultivation of the sea*).

average man of transport and of wishes of a kind pertaining to travel; but it was very big as a *possibility*, the world still being almost empty of men.

Thus, it was the value of h_1 that limited the total number of the population until the dawn of the industrial revolution. However, contemporary progress is ceaselessly diminishing h_1 . It is already in the region of one-third of one hectare, certain good agronomists placing it at one-tenth; it will surely be much smaller still around 2100 and 2200. Even if it makes its dragon-like determinism harshly felt in certain nations in the course of the next fifty or eighty years, *it will probably no longer be this factor that will, in the future, determine the number of human beings.*

This *primary* regulator having been defeated, will h_2 , the amount of space with respect to industry (*secondary* sector) be substituted for it? No, for we see clearly that industrial establishments only count for a few square meters per head of the population today and have every prospect for doing so in the future.

One must, then, look to the *tertiary*; h_3 is the most distinct of these factors and grows noticeably with the standard of living. The little capital of my native district, Cahors, lived inside the same city walls since the time of the Romans. Since 1945, without its population having increased, it has burst its medieval ramparts and almost doubled its area.

However, this is only a question of a few square meters per inhabitant: about one hundred (house plus green area), according to the norms of the most pleasant neighborhoods of Washington; two hundred according to the norms of Pedregal in Mexico, one of the two or three residential districts in the world today of which the connoisseurs hold a high opinion.

Since one hectare is equivalent to ten thousand square meters, it can be seen that, of the three items, h_1 , h_2 , and h_3 , and according to present trends, h_1 will still probably be the biggest towards the year 2100; but the total of the three may easily be less than one thousand square meters, which will allow densities of ten men to the hectare.

There remains the term h_4 , also of a tertiary nature, but vague. Since it is much more qualitative than quantitative, we can only attempt to define it by having recourse to memories of our travels, to our emotion in the fact of discoveries made in the world, to the prestige of explorers,

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pioneers, and Alpinists; it is thus possible that our descendants will know, only through our books, "the hope of arriving late in a wild place."

Inveterate calculators will be able to estimate the number of people who would jostle each other on the hundred kilometers of beach along the French Côte d'Azur if each of the 500 million Frenchmen were given permission three times, or even once, in his lifetime to spend a month or two weeks there.¹⁵ They can likewise calculate how many meters of beaches with Mediterranean or tropical climates are at the disposal of each Russian, each Chinese, or each Hindu today, and how many kilometers of artificial beach it would be necessary to construct so that each one might come to spend there two weeks of paid holiday. Many serious men will belittle this sort of calculation.

It seems to be of interest, however, to show the distortions which will exist between yesterday's mankind, today's, and that which we are on the way to begetting. Our civilization is today oriented toward the increase in the quantity of consumer goods and toward the reduction of the amount of space. The rich man of the eighteenth century had only a horse-drawn carriage, a few mirrors, hardly any books, and no refrigerator. The average man of tomorrow will be rich, much richer than was the rich man of yesterday in food products and in manufactured goods; he will be gorged with vitamins, oranges and pineapples, aeroplanes, electric razors, and even classical music—but when the contemporary of Voltaire was rich, he had a large house in the heart of a vast park, an island of humanity in an almost virgin Nature. That allows us to dream of what life in Western Europe would be today if the advance in the standard of living could have been accomplished since the eighteenth century while maintaining a fixed level of population. Despite his almost immeasurable primary and secondary riches, our rich grandson will neither be able to live in nor build himself such houses because of lack of space; to know their charm and civilizing value, he will be reduced to buying his ticket and joining the nostalgic and interminable flock which, in the last fifteen or thirty years, has already begun to file through our stately homes at Vaux-le-Vicomte, Champs, Anet, Malmaison, Dampierre, Courances, Ormesson, Chamarandes.

15. 550 million are equal to the density of ten to the hectare; with the density one hundred it would be 5,500 million. This calculation is of interest even for figures on the order of 100 million.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

I. THEORY

Intonation matters, in English as well as in Chinese. We may describe an item in the human record as historically (really) significant, or as (merely) historically significant. The distinction is between an empirical judgment of fruitfulness in time and a normative judgment of aridity in the here and now.

The ambiguity of "historical significance" is a virtue, not a flaw. To resist the taxonomical zeal for precision, the literalist's restriction of one phrase to one concept, is both an intellectual and moral requirement for the historian. For, as a whole man, the historian indeed has intellectual and moral requirements—he must know that he stands on shifting sands, yet he must take a stand—and the tension implicit in "historical significance," the strain between neutral analysis and committed evaluation, must be acknowledged and preserved if history, the records men make, and history, the records men write, are to come close to correspondence.

1. INTELLECTUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMBIGUITY

Historical understanding precludes restriction of the vision to literal meanings. What, for example, does the character *te* (pronounced like

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the French *de*) denote in a Chinese text? During the many centuries of Confucian and Taoist intellectual prominence in China, *te* suggested a cluster of meanings around the concept "virtue" or "power" (of virtue). But when Ch'ên Tu-hsiu (1879-1942), a hater of the old intellectual culture in which *te* was profoundly imbedded, summoned "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy" to root it out, his "Mr. Democracy" was Te Hsien-sheng, "Mr. *Te*," the old character drained of its Confucian substance, tamed as a mere phonetic (in a foreign language, at that) to an anti-Confucian purpose.¹ And yet its old associations were still there; significantly so, for they lent the term its sterilizing force, appropriate to its new associations. Virtue, power, were delivered over to an iconoclastic ethic. At one and the same time the old *te*, with the old culture, was being proclaimed merely *historically* significant—that is, dead to modern men—and historically really *significant*, confirmed as such by its very selection as the literal point of departure for a metaphoric drift.

Historical process is captured in such transitions from literalness to metaphor. As some commentators remarked, Chiang Kai-shek "lost the mandate" in 1949, when Mao Tse-tung supplanted him as the ruler of mainland China. Reference to the "mandate of Heaven" would once have had a literal quality, as a live Confucian assumption about dynastic successions. But passing time reduced it to archaism, a metaphor with a period air that would call attention to passing time. One could hardly contemplate Chinese history without realizing how historically significant Confucian political theory had been; and one could hardly seize more surely the fact of its displacement than by savoring "historical significance" in its full range of meaning. It is historical consciousness that attunes the ear to the changing ring of "mandate of Heaven"—from the ring of current coin, to a knell.

In time, then, words will not stand still. Moralistic theories of history, like the praise-and-blame Confucian, or idealistic theories of antihistory, like the Platonic, dwell on timeless pattern or being, not process, and therefore deal in absolutes. But a concern with process, becoming, ousts the language of fixity for the language of movement—the language of relativism. Absolutism is parochialism of the present, the confusion of one's own time with the timeless, a confusion of the categories of reasonable and rational. This is the confusion one fosters when he

1. Fukui Kojun, *Gendai Chugoku shiso* ("Recent Chinese Thought") (Tokyo, 1955), p. 15.

judges other times by his own criteria, without acknowledging that he himself, not the culminator of history but the latest comer, has only what his subjects have—ideas, aesthetics, morality that may be reasonable, pleasing, commendable in his own day and age, but surely not rational, beautiful, or mandatory as transhistorical absolutes. No one has the norm of norms.

2. MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMBIGUITY

History, however, is not all. The present is precious in every generation. True, historians meet their subjects through a chastening acceptance of their common relativity, but they all have something else in common, the human prerogative to hold their own convictions. The moral dilemma suggested by historical relativism has often been noted: if to explain seems to excuse, an abyss opens. Or as Nietzsche, speaking of value in its aesthetic dimension, sardonically described its dissolution: "We can feel that one thing sounds differently from another, and pronounce on the different 'effects.' And the power of gradually losing all feelings of strangeness or astonishment, and finally being pleased at anything, is called the historical sense or historical culture."²

Yet, history and value need not be taken to confront each other so blankly. Abdication of standards, far from being the price of historical insight, precludes it. There is more than one way to diverge from relativism.

One way, the one we have noted as the antihistorical way, is to appraise the past, insofar as it fails to accord with one's own standards, as the product of fools or knaves. (Such was the way, for example, of many early twentieth-century unhistorically minded critics of the traditional literary examinations for the Chinese bureaucracy. These critics, with the modern world's criteria of professionalism, explained as aberrations, from their standpoint, what was actually the triumph of a non-specialized culture's amateur ideal).³ But there is another way, safely historical—indeed, indispensable for historical explanation—to take one's own day seriously, retaining the moral need to declare one's

2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History* (New York, 1957), p. 45.

3. See Joseph R. Levenson, "The Amateur Ideal in Ming and Early Ch'ing Culture: Evidence from Painting," in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 320-41; and Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity* (Berkeley, 1958), chap. ii.

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self and stand somewhere, not just to swim in time. For the historian's own day is his Archimedean leverage point outside the world of his subject. By judging as best he can (*not* by denying himself, out of intellectually relativist scruples, the right to indulge in judgment), he raises to his consciousness the historically significant question. Why should a generation comparable enough to his own to be judged in his vocabulary not be analogous to his own? Why (since he also should not deny, out of morally absolutist scruples, the right of his subjects to be seen as living out the values of their culture, not aiming at and falling short of his), why should earlier men, who deserve to be taken as seriously as he himself, diverge so far from his standards? He must articulate his own standards in order to find the rationale of his subjects', in order—by raising the question he could never recognize if he lacked his own convictions—to find what made it reasonable for the earlier generation to violate its historian's criteria of rationality. The relativism which gives the past its due can really be arrived at only by men who give the present its due.

Relativism, then, is essential for historical understanding, but it is a relativism which depends on, not banishes, a contemporary acceptance of norms. If it seems merely wilful paradox, a violation of rationality, to suggest that it is proper to be absolutist in order to be properly relativist, that may be because rationalism is not sufficient for historical knowledge. As we indicated at the outset, the basic term for expressing such knowledge, the quality attributed to the subject of the historian's statement—historical significance—has paradox built into it. For, on the one hand, many things are granted historical significance without distinction of value: of two eighteenth-century Chinese novels, it is possible to say that *Ju-lin wai-shih* ("The Scholars") is as historically significant as *Hung-lou meng* ("The Dream of the Red Chamber"). Each one yields to the modern reader many insights about eighteenth-century China and the course that lay before it. But we can say, on the other hand, that "The Dream"—and here all value-neutrality vanishes—is a splendid work of art. Historical knowledge, knowledge of the conventions of its society, may make it more accessible to moderns and foreigners, but these are simply annotator's aids: it speaks directly to us. Except for historians on duty, the historical status of "The Dream" is just a detail, irrelevant to the sense of appreciation. Though it comes from long ago and far away, we do not read it *because* of that fact. To say now of

"The Scholars" that it has historical significance is not to equate it with "The Dream"—both novels contributing to historians' explanations—but to distinguish it from "The Dream" and the latter's supra-historical aesthetic significance. The historical significance of "The Scholars" is "mere." The phrase is a phrase of relativism, but the voice is the voice of value.

To judge a work as one of high value is to praise its creator and maintain one's own contemporary standards as the measure; to dismiss a work as of little or no contemporary significance is tantamount to saying that "history" created it, determined it, making any evaluation superfluous. Something reduced to historical significance, without being granted the quality of transcending its function of helping to explain its time, is left to be explained by its time, since no suprahistorical artistry, the proper object of praise, is perceived to inform it. It is here that historical significance has its relativist associations; in the draining away of the personal element, so that "history" is the creator, the implied determinism precludes the intrusion of value. Perhaps this is what gives a grain of meaning to Acton's bromide, "Power corrupts. . . ."—it expresses the truth that historicism (with relativism attending) is tied to amorality. For really impressive power is the gift of a society sufficiently complex to bear the weight of historical study, and the holder of power, certainly the holder of absolute power, through his very freedom to affect the destiny of his milieu, may identify his decisions with the destined course of history.

And yet, to recapitulate, the relativism to which historians of process are drawn does not condemn them to the corrosion of their own values. There is all the difference in the world between acknowledging no creators but history (and thus inviting such corrosion) and valuing creativity, to the effect that relativistic "historical significance" actually acquires normative significance. This is not the relativism, the historical consciousness, which makes the contemporary man impotent, in the Nietzschean sense. Rather, it can free men from the impotence of feeling under the dead hand of the past. Such has been its function in recent Chinese history, from which we have brought up a few details to clothe the theory of historical significance. It is now time to bring theory down to history.

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II. HISTORY

1. MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMBIGUITY

An eighteenth-century "proto-Western" Chinese thinker, Tai Chen, had little influence in his own day but was taken up and celebrated by Chinese thinkers in the 1920's.⁴ With what shade of meaning was he historically significant?

Paradoxically, this latter-day assertion of Tai's historical significance, in our first sense of the phrase, confirmed him as historically significant only in the second sense. Tai's modern admirers, granting his ideas a formal philosophical importance in themselves, dramatized the fact that they had had no effective importance in the history of Chinese thought; their historical importance really consists in their historical *unimportance* (that is, in the circumstances—provocative to the historian of thinking but irrelevant to the analyst of thought—that Chinese thinkers of one age should ignore thought which a later age would value). For Tai Chen was endowed with importance only when it was too late for him to have any objective influence, when Chinese intellectual life was being molded by other, Western authority. Twentieth-century Chinese honored him not really because he was intellectually important to them—it was Western thought which had persuaded them to be "modern"—but just because, in his historical context, he had never been important at all. Had he been thus important, historically *significant* for the future, young Chinese modernists would have inherited their values and would, therefore, not have been emotionally pressed to unearth a Chinese precedent in order to mask their defection from traditional Chinese civilization. He was merely *historically* significant; what that defection implied was submission not to his, but to an outside intellectual influence, which alone made intellectually possible (and thus made psychologically necessary) the discernment of any significance in a figure like Tai Chen.

And yet, by these moderns, Tai was esteemed, endowed by their own criteria with value quite the reverse of the "merely historical." They were trying to raise a historical Chinese utterance to more than histori-

4. See Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, "Tai Tung-yüan sheng-jih erh-pai nien chi-nien hui yüan-ch'i" ("The Origins of the Conference To Commemorate the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Tai-Chen"), *Yin-ping-shih ho-chi* ("Collected Works of the Ice-Drinker's Studio") (Shanghai, 1936), *wen-chi* XIV, 38-40.

cal significance because they, with so many of their contemporaries, were increasingly deaf to historical Chinese utterances in general. They were unhappily persuaded that, for their own day, harsh judgment of an unreconstructed Chinese culture was required of them. They could not oust the suspicion that the values coming down to them from Chinese history were, to a staggering degree, of merely historical significance, dead in the modern day, a blight on creativity.

Thus Lu Hsün (1881-1936), most searing and powerful of all Chinese writers in this iconoclastic century, saw the famous Confucian classical virtues, *tao*, *te*, *jen*, and *i*, as "eaters of men," old figures still loathsome alive, for their partisans were even then the "establishment"⁵ (like Nietzsche's proponents of "monumental history" with their hidden motto, "Let the dead bury the—living"⁶).

Chang and Li are contemporaries. Chang has learned some classical allusions for his writing, and Li has learned them too in order to read what Chang has written. It seems to me that classical allusions were contemporary events for the ancients, and if we want to know what happened in the past we have to look them up. But two contemporaries ought to speak simply, so that one can understand the other straight away, and neither need trouble to learn classical allusions.⁷

Some foreigners are very eager that China should remain one great antique for them to enjoy forever. Though this is disgusting, it is not to be wondered at, for after all they are foreigners. But in China there are people who, not content to form part of a great antique themselves for those foreigners to enjoy, are dragging our young folk and children with them.⁸

Here was an iconoclasm, then, a bitter value judgment, expressed as resentment of the absolute presentness of a past which should be relative—or, *historically* significant, that is, a proper subject of study but not a basis for present action. The concept of "antique" implies the historical sense, a feeling for the piquancy of the contrast between antique and the living contemporary. To feel that one's self or one's culture is an antique is to see the self as a means, something to furnish observers with a delicate *frisson*, something used and therefore dead.

5. See Lu Hsün, "A Madman's Diary," *Selected Works of Lu Hsün* (Peking, 1957), I, 8-21.

6. Nietzsche, p. 17.

7. Lu Hsün, "Random Thoughts (47)," *Selected Works*, II, 47.

8. Lu Hsün, "Sudden Notions (6)," *Selected Works*, II, 122-23.

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When the old culture was indicted as a dead stiffer of life, the indictment was moral, with "historically significant" implied as an epithet in the realm of value, not as a relativist acknowledgment of process. It was a desperate assault on a traditional culture seen as very much too much in being, tragically not becoming something else, or modern.

And yet, the traditional culture which Lu Hsün criticized so absolutely was in fact in process; it had become traditionalistic. Men who resisted the new as foreign were adhering to the old in a new way, advancing essentially romantic (relativist) arguments from "national essence" rather than rationalistic arguments from universal validity. These were no longer plain Confucian arguments for conservatism but conservative arguments for Confucianism—the change was the measure of Confucian moribundity.⁹ And it was just this moribundity, this death-in-life, which imparted such passion to Confucianism's assailants.

Latter-day Confucianists and their hostile contemporaries were equally modern, symbiotically fitting together, and it was "historical significance," an ambiguous term but a single term, which both linked them and distinguished them. Together, traditionalistic Confucianists and antitraditional iconoclasts violated the traditional assumptions of Confucianism, which were anti-relativist in the extreme. Confucianists had always traditionally studied the past, but from the conviction of its eternal contemporaneity and world associations, the absolute applicability of the fixed standards and sequential patterns of classical Chinese antiquity. Now, however, modern Confucianists relativized Confucianism to Chinese history alone, and modern anti-Confucianists relativized it to early history alone. The traditional feeling for history as philosophy teaching by example was dissipated equally by the traditionalistic "history" as organic life and the iconoclastic "history" as a nightmare from which men should be trying to awake.¹⁰

But by this same token, the traditionalistic Confucianists and the anti-Confucianists, equally modern, had a genuine confrontation of their own. The radicals, trying to break the grip of the old ideas and institu-

9. See Levenson, "The Suggestiveness of Vestiges: Confucianism and Monarchy at the Last," in David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright (eds.), *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford, Calif., 1959), pp. 244-67.

10. See Joseph R. Levenson, "Redefinition of Ideas in Time: The Chinese Classics and History," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, XV (May, 1956), 399-404; and Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, pp. 90-94.

tions, thought in terms of the "merely" historically significant and thus devalued history. History, however, was far from being devalued by the romantic conservatives, for whom reason or pragmatism were "mere." The evolution of a diffuse, generalized Chinese radicalism to Marxism may be interpreted as a transition of "historical significance" from normative to relativist usage, in the historicism (hardly a devaluation of history) of the Marxist way of thinking. And this transition came about when the hated traditionalistic opposition could be seen as merely historically significant itself—that is, broken so completely that living, indeed dominant, champions of the old order existed no longer. Iconoclasts in power could do what iconoclasts struggling for power could not do: adopt the relativism of their bested opponents and turn from blasting the old with hatred to explaining it coolly away. The conversion which the radicals made, from a moral to an intellectual stance, changed the tone of "historical significance" and, in the very act of ripping across the Confucian historiographical premise ("process" piercing "reality"), exorcised the ravages, the violence of the tear.

2. INTELLECTUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMBIGUITY

The modern historically minded conservatives, with their "national-essence" incantation (covertly antitraditional) as their final, self-destructive charm against openly antitraditional influences, had the relativism of despair. Their opponents, like Lu Hsün, began by signing out of responsibility for the tradition whose current inanition bred despair; as modern men, they said, they rejected history's claims. Yet these iconoclasts knew that they were not just modern men but modern Chinese, knew it in the fever of their revulsion—far from intellectual detachment—which bespoke their tie in history to the moorings they longed to slip. They had their own despair, not just the anguish of seeing their triumph deferred or problematical, but the anguish of having to seek such triumph at all.

In the circumstances, their assessment of traditional values under the aspect of "historical significance" tended to drift from the normative pole to the relativistic, a relativism of compensation for despair. In effect, the collapse of their opponents put an end to that "eternal contemporaneity" originally enshrined in their opponents' values and released the new men from their compulsion to attack. Once a historic Confucian spokesman showed that he knew how to die (or after his

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death, at least, to lie down), he could be neutrally assigned to his own day and domesticated historically for modern China, even a China vastly removed from the old in spirit.

It was a resolution of an emotional problem (the need to alleviate the pain of a ruthless expression of value) by intellectualizing it; it was the disarming of absolute judgment by relativizing it. All manner of early Chinese achievements fell into place, acceptable as the Communist nation's worthy past, no longer necessarily the targets of present revolution. Relativistic history—admitting the historically *significant* instead of expelling the *historically significant*—was the sweet sterilizer of values, or the cauterizer of the wounds dealt in cutting them out.¹¹

And so the Communist regime restores the old Manchu imperial "Forbidden City" in Peking, long dilapidated, and the tombs of the Ming emperors, with careful attention to historic décor and design. "It has been left, strangely enough, to a Communist government, ruling in the name of the People and under the slogans of anti-imperialism, to spend a great sum on a most complete and beautifully executed restoration of the tomb of Ming Yung Lo, the founder of Peking, and a whole-hearted autocrat."¹² Is it all so strange?

It is not strange that the republicans of 1912, who claimed metaphorically to be "restoring the Ming," the native Chinese predecessors of the Manchu conquest-dynasty of Ch'ing, should let the Ming tombs crumble. Factors of social demoralization aside, these early republicans were really "engaged" against monarchy as against a visible, contemporary foe; its monuments were symbols of something currently provocative. But the Communists could "restore the Ming" in another metaphorical sense, as museum keepers restore. They were freed from the earlier radicals' frustration at seeming to be museum dwellers. The Communists' act of restoration was a gesture of release, a recognition of a deadness

11. For a fuller discussion of historical scholarship as historical evidence, the "placing" of the Chinese Communists by their studies of the past (including—incidental to their concern with periodization, that is, process, and the isolation of a "people's tradition"—their rehabilitation of non-Marxist radical iconoclasts' old antipathies, like Chinese medicine and classically enshrined institutions), see Joseph R. Levenson, "History under Chairman Mao," *Soviet Survey*, No. 24, April-June, 1958), pp. 32-37; and Levenson, "Ill Wind in the 'Well-Field': The Erosion of the Confucian Ground of Controversy," in Arthur F. Wright (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, 1960).

12. C. P. Fitzgerald, *Flood Tide in China* (London, 1958), pp. 20-21.

in monarchy so final that its monuments could be relativized to historical significance.

It may be suggested, of course, that Mao Tse-tung was indulgent to the Yung-lo emperor because one good autocrat deserves another. Is the new Chinese regime just another dynasty, and yesterday eternal? Do the Communists, with all their concern for process and their apparent superseding of Confucianists, fall into a timeless Confucian historical pattern?

Intonation matters: the answer implied is, No. Whatever the Chinese Communists have won, it is not the "mandate of Heaven." Not the history, only the sketch of theory, has come full circle.

INDIAN CONTACTS WITH WESTERN LANDS— MEDIEVAL

The rise and rapid progress of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. drew the East and West much closer than any force had yet done and opened out numerous channels of intercourse, material and spiritual. Travel and trade increased when the first shocks of war and hostility subsided, and, thanks to the writings of Arab travelers, geographers, and historians, we possess a more than usually complete record of the transactions of the age. The early Arab geographers gained from India the notion that there was a world center which they styled *arin*, a corruption of the name of the Indian town of Ujjayinī, where there was an astronomical observatory and on the meridian of which "the world cupola" or "summit" was supposed to be located.¹

1. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London, 1937), p. 384. I have made free use of Hitti's magnificent work, and, unless otherwise indicated, all the facts in this section are drawn from it.

Abul Kasim Obeidullah bin Ahmad, better known as Ibn Khurda-
beh, was one of the earliest of these Arab writers. His ancestors had
been Magians of Persian descent before they embraced Islam. He was
director of the Post and Intelligence Service in Media and initiated road-
books and itineraries with his *Book of Routes and Kingdoms*, first pub-
lished in A.D. 846, but often revised at least until 885. Ibn Rosteh, also of
Persian origin (ca. A.D. 903), wrote a work called "Precious Bags of
Traveling Provisions." Ibn Al Fakih al-Hamdāni composed about the
same time his *Kitāb-al-Buldan*, a comprehensive geography often cited
by al-Maqudasi and Yākūt. About A.D. 950, Ishtakrī produced his *Masaliḥ
al-Mamalik*, with colored maps for each country; at his request Ibn
Hawkal (943-77), who traveled as far as Spain, revised the maps and
text of his geography; later, he rewrote the whole book and issued it
under his own name. Abu-al-Hason 'Ali al-Masūdī, "the Herodotus of
the Arabs," followed the topic method instead of the dynastic in his
history. His "Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems," brought down to
947, was a cyclopedia of history and geography. Abu Zaid Hassan of
Siraf on the Persian Gulf was no great traveler himself, but he met
many well-traveled merchants and scholars, including Masūdī, and
edited in 916 an earlier work on India and China by adding to it data
drawn from his own studies and talks. His predecessor, who wrote in
A.D. 851, has often been wrongly identified as the merchant Sulaiman
who seems to have been only one of the several authorities relied on by
that anonymous writer.²

Arabic historical composition attained its zenith in Masūdī and his
contemporary Ṭabarī (838-923) and rapidly declined after the *Univer-
sal History* of Miskawayat (1030). Ṭabarī's work was abridged and ex-
tended to 1231 by Ibn-al-Athir (1160-1234), who made an original con-
tribution on the period of the Crusades. Another universal history from
the creation down to 1256 was the work of Ibn-al-Jawzi (1186-1257) of
Baghdad. Ibn-Khalikan (1282), the chief judge of Syria, was the first
Muslim to compose what we may regard as a dictionary of national
biography, a work whose way was paved to some extent by Yākūt and
Ibn Asākir (1177).

With this brief account of the principal sources of information, we
may now observe the details of the relations between India and the

2. K. A. N. Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India* (Madras, 1939), pp. 21-22.

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Western countries and try to indicate the cultural effects that resulted. In the seventh century bamboo was imported from India to al-Khatt, the coast of al-Bahrayan, for the shafts of lances. The best swords came from India, whence their name, *Hindi*. After the fall of Rome, the Red Sea and Persian Gulf trade was run solely by Arabs and Indians for many centuries. According to Hamza of Ispahan and Masūdi, the ships of India and Ceylon were constantly visible, after the fifth century A.D., moored as high up the Euphrates as Hira, near Kufa, a city some forty-five miles to the southwest of ancient Babylon.³ There was a gradual recession in the headquarters of the Indian and Chinese trade; from Hira it descended to Obolla, the ancient Apologos; from Obolla it was transferred to the neighboring city of Basra, then to Siraf on the northern shore of the Persian Gulf, and finally to Kish and Hormuz.

The Arab conquest of Makran, the coastal region of Baluchistan, shortly after 643 brought the Arabs to the very borders of India, and the reduction of Sind in 711-12 by Muhammad bin Qasim brought the lower valley and delta of the Indus under their permanent occupation. Among the cities conquered was the seaport of Daybul, which had a statue of the Buddha "rising to a height of forty cubits." The conquest soon extended (713) as far north as Multan in southern Panjab, the seat of another renowned Buddhist shrine where the invaders found a crowd of pilgrims whom they took captive. The rest of India remained free till a fresh series of inroads began at the end of the tenth century under Mahmud of Ghazna. But under al-Mansur (754-75) Kandahar, on the northwestern frontier of India, was reduced and a statue of the Buddha was demolished. His lieutenants, in fact, carried their raids as far as Kashmir, the rich and extensive valley of the northwest Himalayas. A fleet was dispatched (70) from Basrah to the delta of the Indus to chastise pirates who had ventured to plunder Juddah. Here then in Sind was thus established the first major contact between Semitic Islam and Indian Buddhism and Hinduism on a lasting basis. Thus Indian thought came well within the horizon of Islam in the eighth century and helped to produce a steady Indian influence on the Islamic world. Wandering Indian monks were a factor of practical importance in the age of the Abbasid Khalifs of Baghdad. Jahiz (d. A.D. 866) pictures

3. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither* i. 83, cited by James Hornell in *The Origins and Ethnographical Significance of Indian Boat Designs*, *Memoirs of A.S.B.*, VII, 3 (1920), 202.

them very graphically and calls them *Zindiq* monks. One of the monks chose to bring suspicions of theft on himself and endure maltreatment rather than betray a thieving bird, because he did not wish to be the cause of the death of a living being. The monks were either Hindu *Sādhus* or Buddhist *Bhikṣus*, or those who followed their methods and example.⁴

Buddhist works were translated into Arabic under Mansur and his celebrated successor in the Abbasid Khalifate, Harun al-Rashid (786-809), from Persian or Pahlavi or directly from Sanskrit. Among them were *Balauhar wa Būdāsāf* (Barlaam and Josaphat, being the story of the conversion of an Indian prince Josephat-Buddha by the ascetic Barlaam), and a Bud-book. And there was much direct contact with the Buddhist monasteries flourishing in Balkh, the Naubehar (Nava-vihāra or new monastery) for instance, long before the definitive Muslim conquest of India in the twelfth century. Generally speaking, several lines of Indian influence have been traced in Islam as a result of its contacts with Hinduism (in its broadest sense including Buddhism) in Sind and elsewhere outside India. In the sphere of secular popular literature, many a deliverance of ethical and political wisdom, in the dress of proverbs, was taken over from the fables of India such as the *Tales of the Pañcatantra*. The earliest Arabic literary work of this nature that has come down to us is *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, which is an obvious corruption of the names Karaṭaka and Damanaka, the two forces so prominent in the first book of the *Pañcatantra*: it is better known in Europe under the name *Fables of Bidpai*, Bidpai being again the Arabic Bayadabab, through Pahlavi from Sanskrit *Vidyāpati*. This is not a proper name but a title meaning "chief pandit of a court"—the title that was bestowed on the Brahmin philosopher who narrates the fables calculated to instruct and reform the princes. The Arabic was translated in the eighth century from a now lost Pahlavi version of sixth century Persia under King Anūsharwan (531-78), itself from a Sanskrit original also lost to us; the extant *Pañcatantra* is an expanded form of unknown date. The Arabic version became the basis of all existing translations into some forty languages including, besides European tongues, Hebrew, Turkish, Ethiopic, Icelandic, and Malay. The Arabic transla-

4. Titus, *Indian Islam* (London, 1930), citing Goldziher and other authorities.

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tion was the work of ibn-al-Muqaffa, a Zoroastrian convert to Islam, whose suspect orthodoxy brought about his death by fire *ca.* 757.⁵

In the field of science—in mathematics, astronomy and astrology, and in medicine and magic—the secular wisdom of Islam was largely indebted to India. About 773 an Indian traveler introduced into Baghdad a treatise on astronomy, a *Siddhānta* (Arabic, *Sindhind*) which by order of al-Mansūr was translated by Muhammad ibn-Ibrāhīm al-Fazāri, who subsequently became the first astronomer in Islam. The translation was made between 796 and 806 with the aid of Indian scholars. The Arabs had been interested in the stars since desert days, but their scientific study of them began only at this time; and Islam gave an impetus to the study of astronomy as a means for fixing the direction in which prayer should be conducted, that of the Ka'bah. The celebrated al-Khwārizmī (*ca.* 850) based his widely known astronomical tables (*zīj*) on al-Fazāri's work and syncretized the Indian and Greek systems of astronomy, adding his own contributions at the same time. He also brought a treatise on mathematics by means of which the numerals known as Arabic in Europe, and called Indian (*Hindī*) by the Arabs, entered the Muslim world. These numerals comprised the numbers one to nine and the zero, which the Arabs got from India. The decimal system of place values of numerals and the zero have been generally held to be Indian inventions of the Gupta age if not earlier, since Āryabhaṭa alludes to them and a little later Varāhamihira actually uses them. Needham, however, has suggested that the symbol for zero came into use in Indo-China earlier perhaps than in India proper,⁶ but the clear evidence from the *Vāsavadattā* of Subandhu (sixth century A.D.), known to Needham also, leaves no room for doubt that, in spite of the epigraphic evidence from Indo-China which shows that the decimal notation was used in the early seventh century, the earliest reference to it and to the zero symbol occurs in India proper.

However this may be, there can be no question that the Arabs got the knowledge from India and transmitted it to Europe. Al-Khwarizmi (early ninth century) was the first exponent among Arabs of the use of these *Hindī* numerals, and his work on the Hindu method of calcula-

5. Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

6. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, III (Cambridge, 1959), 10-11, esp. n. k.

tion was translated into Latin by Adelard of Bath in the twelfth century and has survived as *De numero indico*, whereas the Arabic original has been lost.⁷ The diffusion of the Arabic (Hindu) numerals in non-Muslim Europe was incredibly slow. Christian arithmeticians preferred for centuries the use of the antiquated Roman numerals and the abacus. It was in Italy that the new symbols were first employed for practical purposes. In 1202 Leonardo Fibonacci of Pisa, who was taught by a Muslim master and had traveled in North Africa, published a work which was the main landmark in the introduction of the Arabic (Hindu) numerals and marked the true beginning of European mathematics.

Khalif Harun al-Rashid is said to have been the first Abbasid to have played and encouraged the game of chess. Chess (Arabic *Shitranj* from Sanskrit *Saturanga*) was originally an Indian game, and it soon became the favorite indoor pastime of the aristocracy, displacing dice. Al-Rashid is supposed to have included a chess-board among his presents to Charlemagne, just as in the crusading period the Old Man of the Mountain presented another to St. Louis.⁸ The shadow play had its origin in India and spread to neighboring countries to the east and west. The Muslims got it from India, either directly or by way of Persia, but the first developed specimen of this literature appears only in the late thirteenth century in the work of a Muslim physician, Muhammad ibn-Dāniyāl al-Khuzā'ī al-Mawsili (ca. 1265-1310), who flourished under Baybars. His book bore the title *Tayf al-khayāl fī Marifat Khayāl al-Zill* ("Phantoms of the Imagination on the Knowledge of Shadow Play").⁹

There was also great influence in the distinctly religious sphere, though largely confined to the development of Sufism. Abū'l Atahiyā (A.D. 748-825), a potter by profession, who gave expression in his poetry to pessimistic meditations on mortality, was well aware of the doctrine of *Zuhad* (asceticism) and hailed, as an example of a highly honored man, the king in the garments of a beggar. Goldziher interprets this as an image of the Buddha; but, whether or not this is so, there is little reason to doubt the influence here of the thought, the religious imagery

7. Hitti, p. 573-74.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 330. "The Old Man of the Mountain" is the translation in the crusaders' chronicles of the title *Shaykh al-jabal* borne by Rashid-al-Dīn Sinān (1192) who resided at al-Maṣyād and whose henchmen struck awe and terror into the hearts of the crusaders (*ibid.*, p. 448).

9. *Ibid.*, p. 690.

of expression, and pious practices of both Buddhist and Vedāntic sources. The first individual to be dubbed a *sūfī* by later tradition was the famous occultist Jābir ibn-Hayyān (fl 776) who professed an ascetic doctrine of his own.¹⁰ Typical of this early quietist asceticism is his contemporary, Ibrāhīm ibn-Adham of Balkh (ca. 777); the Sūfī legend of his conversion is obviously modeled on that of the Buddha. Ibrāhīm appears as a king's son who, while hunting, heard some mysterious voice warning him that he was not created for such a purpose. Thereupon the princely sportsman dismounted and forever abandoned the path of worldly pomp for that of asceticism and piety. According to another legend his conversion came as a result of having observed from the window of his palace a beggar contentedly enjoying a meal of stale bread soaked in water and seasoned with coarse salt. When assured by the beggar that he was fully satisfied, Ibrāhīm put on haircloth and took to a wandering life. After his Sūfī conversion Ibrāhīm migrated to Syria, where Sūfism had its earliest organization, and lived by his own labor. A Persian, Bāyazīd al-Bistāmi (875), whose grandfather was a Magian, probably introduced the doctrine of *fanā* or absorption in the personality of God. Another Persian, al-Hallāj (the carder), was in 922 flogged, exposed on a gibbet, and then decapitated and burned by the Abbasid inquisition for having declared, "I am the truth," that is, God. His crucifixion made him the great Sūfī martyr, whose mystic theory is clearly expressed in these verses quoted in his biography:

I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I.
We are two souls dwelling in one body.
When thou seest me, thou seest Him.
And when thou seest Him, thou seest us both.

Al-Hallāj's tomb in West Baghdad still stands as that of a saint. The religious practices of Sūfī communities include ethical self-culture, ascetic meditation, and intellectual abstraction much like yoga, involving kenosis and ecstasy. The Sūfīs were also evidently responsible for the diffusion of the rosary (*Subhah*) among Muslims: "Of Hindu origin, this instrument of devotion was probably borrowed by the Sūfīs from the Eastern Christian churches and not directly from India. During [the] Crusades the rosary found its way into the Roman Catholic

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 433 ff.

West." It is first mentioned in Arabic literature about A.D. 810 by the poet laureate abu-Nuwās.

Islamic conquest in western Asia seems to have given an impetus to the active contact of other creeds with India. There is a well-known stela at Siam Fu in China erected in 781 to commemorate the names and labors of sixty-seven Nestorian missionaries, and on this we find mention of the affiliation of the "Christians of St. Thomas" on the Malabar coast in South India with the patriarchate in Baghdad—a conspicuous witness to the evangelistic zeal of the East Syrian church under the Muslims. The Syrian Christians of Malabar, however, cherish traditions which carry their origin much farther back to the apostolate of St. Thomas in the first century A.D.; but that is another matter. Likewise, the conquest of Persia led to the emigration of Zoroastrians to India in considerable numbers, though the status of *dhimmis* was accorded to them and their fire temples remained standing not only in all the Iranian provinces but in al-Irak and places east of Persia. In India the Parsis continue to this day to represent the immigrants, and they form an important and progressive section of the population of western India. Zoroastrianism yielded a number of distinguished converts to Islam,¹¹ some of whom have been or will be mentioned in the course of this paper. We should also mention the arrival in India toward the close of the thirteenth century of the sect of Assassins after their dispersal from Syria by the blow which the Mamluk Sultan Baybars dealt against them. The Assassins owe their name not to the secret murders—in which they indulged often enough—but to their addiction to the use of *hashish*, a stupefying hemp, which procured them the name of *hashshā-shūn* in Arabic. In India this sect goes by the name of Khojas or Mawlas and acknowledges as titular head the Āgha Khan of Bombay who claims descent from Ismā'il, the seventh *imam*, receives over a tenth of his follower's revenues, and, apart from rare incursions into Indian politics under British rule, spends most of his time as a sportsman between Paris and London.¹²

Among the early schools of Arab art and architecture developed under the Umayyads there was a distinctly Indian school bearing clear marks of the Hindu style, just as in China the mosque tended to be

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 356, 358–59.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 446, 448.

almost a replica of the Buddhist temple.¹³ The Umayyad mosque, built early in the eighth century (705) at Damascus by al-Walid, was in part the work of Indian craftsmen employed by him, and, despite the many vicissitudes it experienced, it has always held its place in Muslim imagination as the fourth wonder of the world.¹⁴ The great mosque at Sāmarrā was built in the reign of al-Mutawakkil (847-61) at a cost of seven hundred thousand dinars; it was rectangular in shape, and the multifoil arches of its windows suggest Indian influence.¹⁵

Shortly before the middle of the tenth century, the first draft of what later became *Alf Laylah wa-Laylah* ("A Thousand and One Nights") was made in al-Iraq. The basis of this draft, prepared by al-Jahshiyārī (942), was an old Persian work *Hazār Afsān* ("Thousand Tales"), containing several stories of Indian origin, to which were added other tales from local storytellers. The *Afsān* provided the general plot and framework as well as the leading heroes and heroines, but additions continued to be made from numberless sources, including Indian and eastern, and folk tales of every description were admitted as well as many anecdotes and love-romances of Harun al-Rashid's court. The *Nights* did not assume a final form until the Mamluk period in Egypt and have since worked their way into all the principal languages of modern Europe as the most popular work of Arabic literature in the West.¹⁶

Much Arabic musical terminology, too, is of Indian origin, although the loss of original technical treatises and the dominance of rhythm at the expense of melody in modern Arabic chants render it difficult for anyone to interpret properly the few surviving works on classical music or to understand fully their ancient designations and terminology. And Abu-al-'Alā' al Ma'arri (973-1057) of Northern Syria, "philosopher of poets and poet of philosophers," went to Baghdad in 1009 and became infected with the ideas of Ikhwān-al-Safā and other ideas of Indian origin. The former was an eclectic school of popular philosophy which began about 970 in al-Basrah and had leanings toward Pythagorean speculations; the name, meaning "the brethren of sincerity," presumably

13. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-67.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 417.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 404-5, 428.

stems from the story of the ring dove in *Kalilah wa-Dimnah* in which it is related that a group of animals by acting as faithful friends (*ikh-wān al-safa*) to one another escaped the snares of the hunter. The school had a branch in Baghdad. "On his return home al-Ma'arri adopted a vegetarian diet and a life of comparative seclusion. His late works, particularly his *Luzūmīyāt* and *Risālat al-Ghufran* (treatise on forgiveness) reveal him as one who took reason for his guide and pessimistic skepticism for his philosophy. It was this *Risālāh* that is claimed to have exercised a determining influence over Dante in his *Divine Comedy*.¹⁷

Al-Birūnī (973-1048), the celebrated Arabic author of Persian origin, has been considered the most original and profound thinker that Islam has produced in the domain of the physical and mathematical sciences. A shī'ite with agnostic leanings and enjoying the patronage of Sultan Māsūd, son of the famous Mahamūd of Ghazna, he sojourned in India and was charmed by Hindu philosophy of which he gave a full account for the benefit of his compatriots in his *Tahqiq Ma li-al-Hind*. Among his scientific contributions are the notion that the Indus Valley must have been an ancient sea basin filled in with alluvium, the description of several monstrosities including what we call "Siamese twins," and the determination with almost complete accuracy of the specific gravity of eighteen precious stones and metals.¹⁸

Not only did Al-Birūnī make known the basic points of Indian religion and philosophy to the Muslim world and set an example for others among his compatriots to follow, not only did he study Sanskrit and translate important works into Persian or Arabic, but he also recorded in clear terms his impression of the havoc wrought in India by the invasions of Mahmūd of Ghazna. He wrote:

Mahamud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed there wonderful exploits by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion to all Muslims. This is the reason why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us and have fled to places where our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment both from political and religious sources.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 372, 458-59.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 383.

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On the state of trade between Europe and Asia in the ninth century A.D., a precious passage in Ibn Khurdadbeh is worth attention:

The Jewish merchants speak Persian, Roman (Greek and Latin), Arabic, and the French, Spanish and Slav languages. They travel from the West to the East, and from the East to the West, now by land and now by sea. They take from the West eunuchs, female slaves, boys, silk, furs, and swords. They embark in the country of the Franks on the Western sea and sail to Farama, there they put their merchandise on the backs of animals and go by land marching for five days to Colzom, at a distance of twenty *parasangs*. Then they embark on the Eastern sea (Red sea) and go from Colzom to Hedjaz and Jidda; and then to Sind, India, and China. On their return they bring musk, aloes, camphor, cinnamon and other products of the eastern countries, and return to Colzom, and then to Farama where they take ship again on the Western sea, some going to Constantinople to sell their goods, and others to the country of the Franks. Sometimes the Jewish merchants, in embarking on the Western sea, sail (to the mouth of the Oronte) towards Antioch. At the end of three days' march (from there), they reach the banks of the Euphrates and come to Baghdad. There they embark on the Tigris and descend to Obollah, whence they sail to Oman, Sind, India, and China. The voyage is thus made without interruption.¹⁹

In fact, it is only with the establishment of the Muslim empire that the Persian Gulf, which had experienced some revival under the Sassanians, came fully into its own as the main channel of trade.²⁰ The importance of Obollah (Ubullā) dates from Sassanian times or even earlier; the Muslims gathered there "such a quantity of booty as had never before been seen." Ibn Khurdadbeh also mentions galangal (galingale) and Kamala, besides porcelain, sugar cane, pepper, cassia, silk, and musk as articles imported from the east. Masūdī, who visited India about 916, mentions nutmegs, cloves, cubebs, camphor, areca nuts, sandalwood, and aloes-wood as products of the Indian archipelago. Edrīsī (A.D. 1099-1186) of Sicily also talks about porcelain, the fine cotton fabrics of the Coromandel, the pepper and cardamoms of Malabar, the camphor of Sumatra, nutmegs, the lemons of Mansura (near the old course of the Indus, northeast of Hyderabad in Sind), the asafetida of Afghanistan, and cubebs as an import of Aden. He names the Konkan as the country of *Saj*, that is, of the sagor teak tree. The Crusades brought the Franks to the Muslim Orient where they acquired new tastes, especially in perfumes, spices, sweetmeats, and other tropical

19. K. A. N. Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India* (Madras, 1941), p. 21.

20. T. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 51-52, 63.

products of Arabia and India with which the marts of Syria were well stocked.²¹ Alum and aloes were among the new drugs with which they became acquainted.

At the capture of Caesarea in 1101 the Genoese, we are told, received as their portion of the booty more than sixteen thousand pounds of pepper. Cloves and other aromatic spices together with pepper and similar condiments came into use in the Occident in the twelfth century, and from that time on no banquet was complete without spiced dishes. Ginger (Ar. and Pers. *Zanjabil*, of Skr. origin) was added to the crusaders' menu in Egypt. More important than all others is sugar (Ar. *Sakkhar*, ultimately Skr.).²² Sugar was the first luxury introduced into the west and nothing else so delighted the western palate. With it went soft drinks, waters tintured by distillation with roses, violets or other flowers, and all varieties of candy and sweatmeats.

Later in the fourteenth century the Mameluke sultans forbade the importation of spices, including the much desired pepper, in order to sell their own accumulated stocks at enormous profit. They also monopolized the manufacture of sugar and at times went so far as to prohibit the planting of the sugar cane for stated periods. Toward the end of the Mameluke period, the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama found his way around the Cape of Good Hope; after this the Muslims lost ground, and their ships in the Red Sea and the Indian waters became exposed to frequent attacks from Portuguese and other European fleets, most of the traffic in spices and other tropical products of India and Arabia being gradually diverted from Syrian and Egyptian ports. "In 1500 the Portuguese established themselves in Calicut on the West Coast of India, and thirteen years later their general Alfonso d'Albuquerque (from Ar. Abu-al-qurq [?], sandal maker), bombarded Aden."²³

The bulk of India passed under Muslim rule in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and remained so until the eighteenth century. To attempt a detailed assessment of the cultural results of this long period of Muslim rule would involve the production of a large volume dealing with a fascinating, but as yet little studied, aspect of a fairly long stretch of Indian history, which is obviously beyond the scope of this paper.

21. Hitti, p. 667.

22. An old Tamil poem of the early centuries A.D. contains the legend of a Tamil dynasty of rulers having first brought the sugar cane from heaven to the earth (*Puranā-nūru* 99, 1-2; 392, 19-27).

23. Hitti, p. 697.

Still, the plan of this article would remain incomplete without some sketch of the results of the long contact between Islam and Hinduism in India itself.²⁴

We have cited above Al-Birūnī's impressions of the results of the first shock of conflict. But even declared enemies cannot engage in a perpetual fight where they are thrown together for long, and the Muslims as rulers and the Hindus as their subjects had to evolve a *modus vivendi* in spite of their avowed and fundamental differences in religious and social outlook and institutions. Common material interests were not slow to develop, and often Hindu rulers found it profitable to employ Muslims and vice versa, though the general atmosphere in politics was one of mutual hostility marked by destruction of temples, discrimination against Hindus in matters of education, employment, famine policy, and taxation. The rise of Vijayanagar in the south, the steady opposition of the Rajputs to Muslim rule in the north; and the rise of the Marāṭha power, which undermined the Mughal empire without, however, being able to establish a stable empire of its own, are sufficiently indicative of the sustained political tension which was the rule except under the illustrious Akbar who strove hard, but without success, to establish a composite polity in which Hindu and Muslim could cooperate on equal terms. The shrewd French merchant, Bernier, who traveled extensively in India and mixed freely with Indians of all grades late in the seventeenth century, observed: "The Great Mogul is a foreigner in Hindustan. He finds himself in a hostile country or nearly so, a country containing hundreds of Gentiles (Hindus) to one Mughal or even to one Muhammadan." Highly placed Muslims often married Hindu women, and Hindu converts were admitted on easy terms to all the honors of Muhammadan nobility. But such developments were frowned upon by the orthodox *ulema*. Much less did they tolerate any advantages enjoyed by Hindus as such. Writing in the fourteenth century, the historian Barani bewailed the privileges enjoyed by the Hindus under Muhammad bin Tughlak in these terms: "The infidels and polytheists are regarded as *kharājīs* and *dhimmīs* and, therefore, they are advanced to great positions and are honored; they are rewarded with drums, banners, and standards inset with jewels; dresses of gold brocade and saddled horses are presented to them; and they are appointed

24. For what follows I draw mainly upon my *History of India* (Madras, 1950), Part II, "Mediaeval India."

to governorships, high offices, and important posts." Even in the capital, he continues, the Hindus "build houses like palaces . . . they employ Muslims as their servants who run in front of their horses and the poor among the Muslims beg alms from them at their palace gates. Inside the very capital of the sultanate they are called *rai*, *rānā*, *thakur*, *sāh*, *mehtah*, and *pandir*." This toleration of Hindus was, in fact, one of the pretexts for Timur's destructive inroad at the end of the century. But the evidence of tyranny and discrimination is too patent in the annals of the period for us to believe that the mass of the Hindus were truly reconciled to the Muslim rule. The coinage of the early sultanate gives clear evidence of the increasing strictness and intolerance of Muslim rule in India. Hindu symbols like the bull of Siva and the mounted cavalier (Rajput) appeared on the coins of the house of Ghor and of the Slave kings. At first the letters were Nāgari; then Arabic letters were adopted along with one or other of the Indian types, and finally the purely Mussalman type became universal. The last specimens of the mixed type belong to Balban's reign (1266-86). Bernier observed that in his day the land was tilled only by compulsion and recorded that "no adequate idea can be conveyed of the sufferings of the people."

In Southern India the situation was different from that in the north. Early pre-Muslim trade connections between Arabs and people from the shores of the Persian Gulf continued after these had accepted Islam, and the Hindu rulers of the west coast evinced a readiness to allow Muslims to have limited settlements in different ports and commercial cities where they could follow their own laws and religion while engaging in trade to the mutual benefit of Hindus and Muslims. The indefatigable Moorish traveler, Ibn Battuta, testifies that almost every port which he visited in the Indian ocean in the fourteenth century swarmed with Muslim merchants. This led to intermarriages resulting in the growth of communities of mixed origin like the Navāyats of western India, the Moplahs of Malabar, and the Labbais of the east coast. They clung to their maritime trade even after the arrival of the Portuguese and in the face of continued opposition.

The Muslim attempt to penetrate the Deccan from Sind in the eighth century was foiled by successful Hindu resistance of the Chālukyas of Bādāmi and their feudatories; the reactions to the later imperialism of the Khaljis and Tughlaks led to the rise of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar which preserved the country south of the Tungabhadra and

Krishnā rivers as the stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy, although the empire had to wage continuous wars with its northern Muslim neighbor, the Bāhmanī Kingdom, which was continued by the five successive states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and later by the Nizam's state of Hyderabad, which carried on the Muslim court tradition until very recently, when it was broken up on a linguistic basis and incorporated with the respective states of the Indian Union. Muslim rule in the Deccan shared almost all the features of that rule elsewhere in India, and its Muslim states made notable contributions to historiography in Persian and to Urdu literature. Its impact on Hindu society and mode of life, however, was on the whole less far-reaching than in the north.

In social life, particularly in the north, the most notable effect was the restrictions on the liberty of women. The purdah became common and women were forbidden to move about freely or talk to strangers, but they were held in esteem and generally treated with much consideration. Among the higher classes there were always a limited number of learned women and even writers. The caste system continued to dominate the Hindu social organization, and, rather than permitting the social democracy of Islam to succeed in breaking down its rigor, the Hindu system of a social hierarchy tended to invade Islamic society in India, and the Hindus who entered Islam by force or persuasion tended to carry with them their traditional rules regarding intermarriage and interdining. The one notable liberalization of Hindu social practice was the sanction of return to Hinduism of persons on whom Islam had been forced. Bukka and Harihara, the founders of Vijayanagar, were the most conspicuous instances that commanded the high authority of the contemporary pontiff of Sringeri, Vidyāranya. The law book of Devala, written in Sind after the Muslim conquest of that land, contains the express rule that women forcibly abducted remained pure, and even if they had become pregnant they regained their original status after childbirth. Ibn Battuta praises the hospitality of the Hindus even to their Muslim guests, though he does not fail to note their strict adherence to caste rules. There was much mutual influence in such externals of life as dress and food, the results of which have been permanent and come down to our own times.

The traditional organization of industry and trade in the form of guilds remained intact and continued to function. Abul Fazl mentions

skilful masters and workmen settling in India to teach the people improved methods of manufacture.

Religion and philosophy were the strong points of Indian culture and, as already noted, al-Birūnī made this known in the Muslim world. When the storm and stress of invasions ceased, and Muslims and Hindus settled to a common life, their natural leaders developed a mutual regard which was rendered easier by the fact that from the beginning Muslim mysticism had derived sustenance from Indian sources. The Sūfī saints who lived and labored in India disseminated their ideas among the people, who soon learned that in essence the two religions did not differ much after all. Hindus began to venerate Muslim saints, and Muslims showed an equal veneration to Hindu *sādhus*—this feature has continued to be a trait of popular religion to this day even in the south of India. There was also much mutually profitable exchange in the realm of the sciences and arts, like astronomy, including astrology, medicine, and music. The evolution of *Urdu* (camp language), a Persianized form of Western Hindi as spoken in the neighborhood of Delhi with Hindi grammar and structure and a predominantly Persian and Arabic vocabulary, was the direct result of the necessary coming together for many purposes of the Hindu and Muslim. Conversions from one religion to the other, not brought about by force or temptation but born out of genuine conviction, were not altogether unknown. The stress laid by Islam on the unity and omnipotence of God in whose presence differences among men count as nothing, caused Hindu leaders to push forward similar concepts which Hindu scriptures had elaborated long before the advent of Islam, and to make them the basis for liberal movements of reform. The new movements were, in fact, a continuation under new conditions of the religion of *bhakti* which had a very long history from the early centuries before Christ and had been recently restated by Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, and Madhva, all from South India.

It must, however, be observed that the thesis sometimes put forward that the *advaita vedānta* of Sankara (early ninth century A.D.) was inspired by the monotheism of Islam lacks evidence and is intrinsically improbable. The development of that system can be fully traced step by step from the Upanishads, through the idealism of Mahāyāna, through Gaudapāda right down to his pupil's pupil, Sankara. The tolerated presence of Muslims in the ports and marts of the west coast, a continuance of long-established trade connections despite the change of

faith among the Arabs, alone imparts an appearance of plausibility to this thesis which, so far as the present writer knows, made its appearance in a doctoral thesis where "originality" as such commands a premium. The thesis flies in the face of all other available evidence and cannot command credence from any close student of the history of Indian philosophic thought.

The most significant figures, from our point of view, in the new reform movements were those of Kabīr and Nānak. Both condemned caste, polytheism, and idol worship, and held that God was one and the same for Hindus and Muslims. Kabīr, the Muslim weaver who flourished at the end of the fourteenth century and early fifteenth, was the great pupil of Rāmānd. Though his thought is Hindu in its shape, the influence of the Sūfī saints and poets of his age is apparent. His verses in Hindī are still familiar in northern India, his followers, *Kabīr-Santhis* ("travelers in the path of Kabīr") included both Muslims and Hindus, and Kabīr himself claimed to be "at once the child of Allah and of Rām." We hear that on his death both claimed his corpse, but when they raised the shroud they found nothing but a heap of flowers. The Hindus took half and cremated them at Benares; the Muslims buried the other half near Gorakhpur. Kabīr was the spiritual ancestor of Nānak, the former of Sikhism. Born in a village in the Lahore District in 1469, Nānak spent his life preaching the gospel of toleration and sought to lay stress on moral virtues and to put an end to religious conflicts. "Religion consisteth not in mere words," said Nānak; "He who looketh on all men as equal is religious. Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation or sitting in attitudes of contemplation. Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimage. Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world; thus shalt thou find the way to religion." Nānak's religion attracted several Muslims to itself. As a poet Nānak (d. 1538) was well below Kabīr, yet his poems and sayings, in a mixture of Hindī and Panjābī, are clear simple, and pithy. His teachings stand closer to Hinduism than do those of Kabīr, and the whole Hindu pantheon is retained in his poems. Kabīr's poems, which include some of the loftiest work in the Hindī language, were collected in the *Bijak* about 1570 by one of his followers, and thirty years later many of his hymns and sayings, *dohas* and *sākhīs*, were included in the Sikh *Granth* ("scripture") by Arjun, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, who compiled it

in Jahangir's reign. Kabīr continued to inspire the growth of several minor sects, including Dādū-Panthis, the followers of Dādū (1544-1603), a cotton carder of Ahmedabad, who lived mostly in Rajputana; the Satnānīs who came up in the neighbourhood of Delhi about 1600 and are best known for their rising against Aurangzeb in 1673 in which several thousands of them lost their lives; and the Bābālālīs, the followers of Bābālāl, with whom prince Dārā had seven interviews at Lahore in 1649. Dārā was indeed one of the greatest scholars of his time, one of the fine flowers of Hindu-Muslim contacts, and a complete contrast to his zealous Muslim brother Aurangzeb. He was well versed in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit and was the author of several works, including translations of the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Yogavāsistha Rāmāyana*, besides a calendar of Muslim saints and several works on Sūfī philosophy. His Persian translation of the Upanishads reached Europe through the Latin translation of Anquetil-Duperron, "which fell into the hands of Arthur Schopenhauer, one of the pioneers of the Transcendental Movement which was just starting in Germany. This revelation of an entirely new realm of thought reacted upon Germany in much the same manner as did the rediscovery of the Greek classics upon Europe at the Renaissance."²⁵ The only other development in the sphere of religion worth notice was the reform movement in Mahārāstrā which provided the background of the Marātha reaction against Muslim rule started by Sivaji. This movement centers round the names of Ēknāth, a Brahmin of Paithan, who died in 608; Tukārām (1608-49), a low-caste grain seller born near Poona and passionately devoted to Krishna as Vitthala or Vithōbā of Pandarpur; and Rāmdās (1608-81), the elder contemporary of Sivaji who accepted him as his guru and guide. The first two were poets and composers of popular devotional songs (*ābhāṅgs*), while *Rāmadāsaś Dāśabodh* ("Instruction to Followers") is more a philosophical than a religious poem.

Only in the northwest of India and in East Bengal did the majority of the population turn Muslim; in the rest of India Muslims constituted, as they still do, a small minority. The Muslim rulers of Bengal engaged scholars to translate the Hindu Sanskrit epics into Bengālī, and the famous Krittivās (born 1346) produced his version of the *Rāmāyana* under such patronage. Likewise, the *Bhāgavata* was trans-

25. H. G. Rawbinson in O'Malley, *Modern India and the West* (Oxford, 1941), p. 544.

lated by Mālādhara Vasu, and there were others. Persian literature found encouragement during the eleventh century in Lahore under the Ghaznavids, later in Delhi and the provincial courts. Delhi developed into a competitor with Bukhāra, the famous university of Central Asia, and with Baghdad, Cairo, and Constantinople. The Mongol conquests drove the literati of the conquered regions to the court of Delhi. Several Muslim authors wrote histories and court chronicles, and their example was followed by Hindu writers who, like Kalhana of Kashmir, produced avowed works of history or composed historical ballads in a more traditional style, like Chand Bardāi, the author *Prthivirāj Rāso*. The age of Mughal rule was marked by many translations of Sanskrit works into Persian carried out under Muslim patronage. The work of Dārā has already been noticed. Akbar caused translations to be made of Kalhana's *Rājatarangīnī*, the *Lilāvati* (a work in mathematics, the epics *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* (with its appendix, the *Harivamsa*), the *Pancatantra*, the story of Nala, and the *Atharvaveda*, by a number of scholars among whom was the orthodox Sunni historian Badāūni. Historiography in Persian flourished all the while. The art of letter-writing came into vogue, and both official and private correspondence were marked by elegance, ornate style, and fanciful imagery; Abul Fazl, Aurangzeb, Jai Singh, Afzal Khan, and Chandra-bhān Brahman were notable among the letter-writers of the time, and their compositions are still held as models. The religious movements of the age and the statesmanly and tolerant outlook of Akbar in his long reign (1556-1605) gave much impetus to literature in the popular languages, and there were several famous Hindī poets who adorned his court. We need notice, however, only the two most outstanding names in the literature of the period, one for its indebtedness to Sūfī mysticism and the other for the permanence and universality of its influence in North India as well as the subtle reflections in its dialogues and situations of the Mughal Indian way of life. In 1540 Malik Muhammad Jāyasī wrote a philosophic epic in Hindī entitled *Padmāvat*, giving the story of Padminī, the Queen of Mewar, in an allegorical setting. Profoundly influenced by Sūfī mysticism, Jāyasī used the love story to proclaim his faith in the highest value of love for the realization of ultimate reality; to him God was a symbol of love, disguised as a woman. Tulasī Dās (1532-1623) was the "tallest tree in the magic garden of mediaeval Hindī poetry." He wrote his great poem *Rām*

Carit Mānas ("The Lake of the Gestes of Rāma") in Benares between 1574 and 1614. It is a veritable Bible to the Hindus of northern India, containing not one impure word or idea. "He appealed, not to scholars, but to the voiceless millions of his native country—the people that he knew." This writer distinctly recalls the melodious recitation (in 1919-20) of Tulasī's verses by his milkman in Benares by way of announcing his arrival with the daily supply of milk.

Hindu and Islamic traits met and mingled, though in different degrees in different contexts, in the realm of architecture and the arts. Though the contrast between the Hindu temple and the Muslim mosque is striking in many respects, they yet have some common features in the open court, surrounded by chambers or colonnades, and the inherently decorative character of the two styles. It is in India that Muslim monuments developed, to an extent unknown elsewhere, the qualities of strength and grace, and these qualities again are distinctive of Indian architecture. Differences in climate, religious practices, and geographical surroundings had led to the evolution of different local styles in the different parts of India, and the Muslims adapted each of these styles to their own requirements and ideals. Concrete and mortar had been little used in India, and without their aid the spanning of wide spaces with arches or the roofing of large areas with domes could not be thought of, though Hindu architects were not ignorant of the arch. The free use of these strong building materials, the graceful decorative use of sacred texts and historic inscriptions interwoven with flowing arabesques or intricate geometric devices, the use of colored stones and marble as well as encaustic tiles of various bright hues, and the minar and minaret, were the specific contributions of Muslims to the architecture of India. But the Hindu appreciation of the noble monuments that constitute a notable heritage of Muslim rule was necessarily mingled with bitter memories of the destruction of Hindu temples which furnished much of the building material for the early mosques of northern India. The shock to Hindu sentiment when the temple of Visvesvara in Benares was pulled down, under orders of Aurangzeb in 1669, to give place to a big mosque must have been even greater than that caused more than six centuries earlier by Mahmud's assault on Somnath. But the studied blending of Islamic and Hindu motifs in the architecture of Fathpur-Sikri is a striking material testimony to the noble dream of Akbar.

Indian Contacts with Western Lands—Medieval

Indo-Muslim architecture reached its most finished expression under Shah Jahan, who took to the extensive use of marble in the place of red sandstone, and the Tāj is indeed one of the wonders of the world. Hindu and Muslim genius found a wide field for collaboration in the realms of painting, music, and other fine arts, but we cannot treat these here.

Enough has been said, however, to establish that it was a mixed bill that resulted from the centuries-long contact between Muslims and Hindus as rulers and ruled. In recent years, particularly since India regained her sovereignty, there has come into evidence a school of thought which seeks to play down the differences between Hindus and Muslims in the days before the establishment of British rule and to argue that the two communities lived as brethren and would have continued to do so but for the nefarious policy of "divide and rule" pursued by the British in India. However, the fact is obvious that, although British administrators may have made use of the communal differences in the hope of prolonging their stay in India and a Wavell may have preferred the intransigence of a Jinnah to that of the Indian National Congress, the British did not create those differences. There have always been two sides to Hindu-Muslim relations. On the one side, liberal Muslims from the scholarly al-Birūnī to Maulana Abul Kalām Āzād regretted the antagonism between Hindu and Muslim, and great humanists like Kabīr and Akbar strove in many ways to weld the two cultures into one. On the other side, there has been a succession of fervid Muslims, from Mahmūd of Ghazna to Jinnah, who defended the purity of the Faith and felt there could be nothing in common between Hindu and Muslim and that Jihad was the primary duty of the Muslims until the whole world was converted into *Dar-ul-islam*, an ideology which anticipated the policy of International Communism by several centuries. The presence of forty million Muslims in the Indian Union and the birth of Pakistan as an independent state in 1947 attest the persistence of both trends today and their probable continuance into the foreseeable future. We can only recall the wise saying of Asoka: *samavāyo eva sādhu*.

A COMPARISON OF ISLÂM AND
CHRISTIANITY AS FRAME-
WORK FOR RELIGIOUS LIFE

Informed Christians have learned in our day that Islâm is not a primitive desert religion spread by the sword, for which faith is reduced to fatalism and women have no souls. Yet Christian historians of religion who avoid such gross errors still tend to present Islâm as at best an imperfect and parochial version of Christian truth, lacking any distinctive genius truly worthy of its independent dignity among the world religions. But until modern times, when the Christianity (and Judaism) of Europeans has been radically transformed along with their secular life, Christianity must long have struck an observer from Mars as, compared to Islâm, the relatively localized faith of largely backward lands. Islâm was the vehicle of a complex and sophisticated sense of social order in a varied and highly creative civilization which was expanding continuously until its field of action encompassed half mankind; it was the only one of the major his-

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torical religions which had successfully displaced in large areas other major faiths such as Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The Martian observing human history in the later Middle Ages might find it easier to understand why Muslims have looked on Christianity as merely an abortive form of Islâm, as for instance in the approach of those Şûfis, Muslim mystics, who see the perfection of Islâm in its uniting at once the dispensation of Law, which reflects the Majesty of God, and the dispensation of Grace, which reflects his Beauty, whereas Judaism and Christianity are limited to only the one or the other. This Muslim conception is as inadequate, however, as its Christian counterpart. Probably any widespread religious system will find a place for all major types of religious insight and practice and is in its own way complete. Yet, as each system has matured, it has revealed a characteristic persistent pattern of norms in the interrelation and subordination to one another of all the elements embodied in it. If Christians are to perceive the genius of Islâm, it must perhaps be through the comparison of such persistent patterns.

COMPARISON BY PARALLELISM

We commonly recognize as significant, naturally, only what has received development in our own systems of thought, in our own traditions of appreciation. We can see hardly any variation at points where an alien art may take great delight in nuances of distinction but, on the other hand, find it fails to make other distinctions, which we miss. We often perceive other arts chiefly as lacking this or that which we prize in our own—for instance, perspective or naturalism. One common method of comparing religions has been to pick some doctrine or some area of thought which is basic and well worked-out in our own and which must have some importance in others as well, and then to show the various ways in which others adumbrate the truth we have found and yet come short of it. The Şûfî approach exemplifies this to a degree, and there are dozens of such comparisons by modern Christians, Muslims, and Hindus. The other religions, in these comparisons, always appear truncated, and one wonders how intelligent people failed to think of the obvious next step.

But, if we hope to compare the religions as frameworks each with its own inner completeness, this will not always or often be possible in terms of any particular experience or other point of reference central

to both. I believe that in the case of Islâm and Christianity, at least, our purpose can be in part achieved as follows. Motifs and tendencies in each can be identified as contributing to or expressing its special total atmosphere. (I might warn the reader that sometimes I find that even heresies or superstitions indicate the *direction* of a body of thought more succinctly than do guarded orthodox positions—thus it is no accident that a dualistic, “Manichean” tendency has always formed a greater danger in Christianity than in Islâm or Judaism, where Satan is a relatively pale figure.) These motifs and tendencies can be set parallel in the one religion and the other, not in respect of the similarities between any two particulars but in respect of their having a corresponding place in the whole structure. The present parallelism is in seven parts, presented first in terms of Christianity and then of Islâm, with key parallel terms italicized. I shall try to point out, in points one to four, pervasive tendencies in the selection of experience and of problematics; in points five to seven I shall describe, in the light of these tendencies, the more explicit structures of doctrine.

In such a parallel tabulation the two religions are bound to suffer some distortion because the parallelism must presume a certain minimum of common patterning imposed for the purpose. My outline moves from human problems faced, to types of spirituality called upon in facing them, and finally to institutional patterns resulting. Even so much of a patterning is in a measure alien to the native course of religious awareness in each case. Its most obvious point of bias is that it starts from men rather than from God. But for Islâm and Christianity I believe it is not inappropriate—probably less so than in the case of less historically minded religions such as some which arose in the Gangetic plain.

However appropriate the method, it is hard, in any case, to eliminate distortion: to present Islâm intelligibly; or to present Christianity in a way that diverse sorts of Christians will recognize as legitimate; and still harder to do both in such a way that the two presentations will mesh and form a comparison! I hope that my presentation of Islâm is sufficiently true to the broad stream of at least Sunnî tradition, and I hope that my interpretation of Christianity is reasonably neutral and nonsectarian, at least within the Western (Catholic and Protestant) tradition.

Islâm and Christianity as Framework for Religious Life

COMMON BACKGROUND OF THE TWO FAITHS

To begin with, the parallelism is perhaps made possible by the fact that there is a considerable range in which these two religions do have a common outlook, where certain characteristic planks of their framework are roughly identical. Islâm and Christianity, together with Judaism, are members of a group which can be called the Abrahamic religions, for all three can trace their faith back to that arch-patriarch. From the Jewish viewpoint Abraham, to whom the great promise was made, is, perhaps even more than Jacob, the common ancestor of Israel. From the Christian point of view, it is he who first took the step of faith which resulted in setting off a special people to the Lord. From the Muslim point of view it is the pure, monotheistic faith of Abraham, who lived before Christians or Jews existed, to which Muhammad was recalling the world after the Christians and Jews had variously corrupted the truths intrusted to them. Christianity and Islâm thus share common historical presuppositions. In both, for instance, Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus are of major importance. This makes their comparison in some ways especially easy but in other ways especially delicate, for we are tempted to take common terms as if they had an actual correspondence in the two faiths, which is often not the case.

Christianity and Islâm have, then, in common the personal monotheism of all the Abrahamic religions, with the trait of giving cosmic seriousness to the historical dimension of human life. Both interpret the transcendent demands for devotion and for high morality which the holy recognize as coming from a single source: God, who is thought of as bringing both our own higher life and all existence whatever into being. The world is thus the creation of one God, who interests himself in each human creature individually, giving to men one life each, and making known to them how he wishes them to worship him and to behave toward one another during it. He will reward or punish men beyond this life according (in principle) to how they have obeyed him or been guilty of disobedience. Thus is set the stage for the religious life, but the two faiths have conceived rather differently the whole course of personel and historical spiritual life which is acted out upon it.

THE CHRISTIAN SIDE OF THE PARALLEL

1. If one had to choose a single vantage point from which a man would find the central themes of Christian teaching to illuminate most problemingly human life and its problems, it would no doubt be in a sensitive *experience of suffering and death*. He must face rooted *evil*: the blank labyrinth of torment, the rottenness in nature. Other aspects of life receive great illumination from Christian thought, but, if just one aspect had to be chosen as most pregnant with insight from a Christian standpoint, we would not set out from the problems presented by human creativity and its self-destructiveness, nor from those presented by human sociality and its inherent contradictions (though, despite their opponents' strictures, faiths like Christianity and Buddhism have not ignored these), nor from the paradoxes of the search for knowledge and truth. Christian thought has found its deepest challenge in the inescapable suffering which brings to life itself its impetus, giving even joy its distinctive flavor. I would say (despite Nietzsche) that it is in this respect above all that Christian religious thought has been not simply religious but most specifically Christian; and it is here that Christianity appears in its best light to the sensitive human observer. This sense of the evil and suffering in life is a thread running through all of Christian doctrine, helping to give a place in a unified whole to its several insights.

2. Even on a casual level we speak pre-eminently of finding *consolation* in our faith. Almost every Christian doctrine serves to make the apparently negative, the destructive, the dying in life bear more searching interpretations. The central event of the Christian story is *Christ's crucifixion* and resurrection, recalled ever since in the perpetually repeated miracle of holy communion, which is the lifeblood of the church. The fact made most strikingly manifest about God is that he suffers; the Christian symbol is the Cross. It is not surprising that Christendom is proudest of its years of persecution, that Christian art has gloried in the martyrs. It is appropriate that in Islamic lands Christians have often been thought of typically as physicians, in the Middle Ages as well as in modern missionary times, and that Jesus appears in their tradition above all as a healer, who comforted the sick and raised the dead.

3. The centrality of the problem of suffering, of the "problem of

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evil," is all the more brought out by Christianity's apparent failure to solve it at all. It has, to be sure, its pat answers: that suffering is simply a means to greater happiness, for it will be more than repaid in Paradise, but this is no real answer, as everyone knows, and it is precisely the query, "But how could a good God do this?" that is the classical basis of Christian disbelief. Precisely because Christianity makes so much of suffering, it cannot escape into some conveniently wise solution but presents its adepts with ever deeper layers of "mysteries." Suffering, illuminated by the Christian doctrines of corruption, faith, and love, becomes transfigured almost beyond recognition. From the start Christians are not concerned with mere pain; conceptions deepen in time to the level of "sacrifice" and of "radical estrangement from God." The Christian does not in the end attempt to escape suffering but to give it new meaning. It is accordingly from the depths of suffering itself that he seeks to bring forth that *joy* which is equally inseparable from his faith.

4. With good reason, then, the type of religious experience most favored in Christianity is the personal acceptance of *redemptive grace*, which is to transform the inward springs of life. This is symbolized both in baptism and in the eucharist and illustrated in the inward struggles of innumerable saints, beginning with the classical case of Paul. The redemptive experience, to be sure, is not always carried far in practice: many Catholics have no very different relations to their saints, or Protestants to their hymns, than some heathens are said to have to their fetishes. Redemption remains, however, the accepted norm, in terms of which other types of religious experience tend to be interpreted.

5. With such problems and such experiences dominating its expectations, Christian doctrine traces the course of spiritual life in terms of God's personal *suffering love*, working as grace in history and in individuals, his potential children. We begin history with the sin of disobedience, entailing the guilty *corruption* of the first man and, through him, mankind, who thus became vile to themselves and are thenceforth involved in suffering and death. We see in history thereafter a process of God's *redemption* of men from bondage to this miserable sinfulness. (The crucial question of some Christian evangelists is, "Are you saved?") Redemption is achieved through God's

patient love and forgiveness of a people which responds to his grace, a love culminating in the service and suffering and sacrificial death of his own son Jesus. The Revelation, the divine "word of God," is at its fullest a compassionate human *Life*, the Incarnation.

6. Sinfulness had entailed, for corrupt men in their unloving perversity, the uncreative, routinized restrictions of a natural social morality, enshrined in the rigor of the Mosaic Law. This *Law is now transcended* through the redemptive love of God, whereby a man is purified and enabled to try to "take up his own cross and follow Christ." Motivated by the love of Christ, to which they respond in faith, men can seek to act always on the basis of and through the *inward power of God's free spirit*, which can now replace for his travailing child the old unfree Law which had subjected him. If now men succeed, it is through the help of God; and if at times they fail, God forgives and renews his help to his own. Men's suffering takes on transformed meaning, being shared with God. The measure of human living becomes the *Sermon on the Mount*.

7. Those who have entered into this new life in Christ form a *redemptive fellowship*, the Church, members together in the suffering body of Christ. Every aspect of piety is to be channeled through this fellowship. Its sacred text is the Bible, a record of its own divine origin. The Church is set apart from the unfree "natural" world of sin and misery from which its members are redeemed and into which it is expected to show forth the love of God. It becomes essentially a special *sacramental society* in contrast to society as a whole (even when statistically the limits of the two are coterminous), set off by its sacred mysteries and dogmas, explicitly at variance with the world. Even within the Church at large, in monastic orders or in dedicated sects, again and again the effort is made to realize more fully the ideal of a purer redemptive fellowship. And thus in the end God will replace the darkness of this whole world with his love and light.

Persons brought up in a Christian environment need little persuading to see in the problems of suffering and death, and in the redemptive love which transforms these problems, the deepest dimensions of human life. The European tradition, in contrast to the Middle Eastern, has cultivated such interests since the time of the Greek tragedians. It may remain paradoxical but it does not become silly to see, in the

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suffering of Christ from whom springs the redemptive fellowship, a cosmic event, to be interpreted in terms of Trinity and Atonement. But Muslims commonly have not seen the problems of life in this perspective, and it is not surprising that they have failed to make sense of the Christian mysteries. It seems almost inexplicable to Muslims that sensitive and intelligent people should stomach such hocus-pocus as that three is one and one is three or demean themselves to the point of making God ridiculous in the crucifixion. They have explained such phenomena as due to the stubborn conservatism of human minds, a willingness when faced with awkward facts to twist and recombine to the point of absurdity the favorite notions of their ancestors rather than frankly to give them up. They take comfort in the fact that over the centuries there have been innumerable conversions from Christianity to Islâm but very few the other way around, even under the best circumstances for Christianity. They hope that as Christians are exposed to Islamic truth they will come to see the distortions of their inherited views.

THE MUSLIM SIDE OF THE PARALLEL

To a Muslim, to concern oneself with discomfort and mortality may seem hardly manly. The Islamic tradition has shied away from the poignant, from the passionate and the paradoxical in life. Islâm sees itself as the religion of sober moderation, and most Muslims would distrust Paul's grand defiance of reason and of nature or an exaltedly private *credo quia absurdum*. Life is complex and mysterious enough and Muslim thought has not pretended to reduce it to simplicity, but it has tried to keep the clearest and most immediate problems in the center of its canvas.

1. If a choice had to be made of one type of experience which would most effectively prepare a man for what Islâm has to offer, I suppose it would be *facing solemn responsibility* for decisions upon which will depend men's lives and fortunes. The Muslim is ever made aware that creation is *purposeful* and that the slightest deed is of moment. In contrast to stars, pebbles, or horses, men must make choices and answer for what they have chosen. Created things that they are—nay, determined in their very ideas at their parents' knees—yet the whole meaning of their lives lies in how they meet the challenge laid upon them

by the unalterable truths of life. In a striking passage in the Qur'ân we find the challenge depicted: "We [God] proposed the faith to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they refused to undertake it, being afraid of it; but man undertook it."

In the general framework of the monotheism which Islâm and Christianity share, the most obvious way to conceive man's central problem is in terms of how he should obey God. Whatever other problems men face will presumably be incidental to that obedience. All else meaningful in human life, all the puzzles of man's nature, are in fact interpretable in terms of his rational responsibility. Accordingly, Christianity also, as an Abrahamic religion, does not lack some awareness of the radical role of human responsibility. In that thought which is most distinctively Christian, however, the problems so raised are both explored and solved in the light of a sense of cosmic corruption, suffering, and love which to Muslim eyes appears paradoxical and evasive. Islâm, on the contrary, has been uncompromising in keeping the sense of cosmic duty unaltered and central, in accord with the straightforward sobriety which seems to characterize it.

The *depth* to which either Christianity or Islâm has probed any given problem is not here in question—only the degree to which a particular awareness has set the tone of the religious system as a whole. And, even on those problems that have least occupied its thinkers, one or the other may have probed more deeply. But, compared to what seems to have been possible in Islâm, Christianity appears to have dimmed and displaced its *emphasis*. The Muslim attitude has wide consequences, and we will find this emphasis an appropriate theme by which to understand all that is most distinctive in Islâm. The sense that men stand under judgment, each act being inescapably right or wrong, runs insistently and undilutedly through all classical Muslim doctrine, orienting all its details.

2. The Muslim seeks not so much consolation as *guidance* from his faith. The commonest prayer of Islâm, repeated many times a day, and often compared to the Lord's Prayer, runs thus:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate: Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the worlds, the Merciful, the Compassionate; Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we serve and on thee do we call for help; guide us the straight path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those upon whom anger falls, or those who go astray.

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The elements of this and of the Lord's Prayer are in fact similar, reflecting the common cosmic setting posited by the two faiths, but in the Muslim prayer the emphasis is shifted characteristically from forgiveness to guidance.

Accordingly, the central event in the story of Islâm—corresponding, for Christians, to the coming of Christ—is the “*descent*” of the *Qur’ân* (that is, its revelation to Muḥammad), a book held to be the very speech of God and eternally inseparable from him. Since that time, this, God’s guidance, his present and almost embodied words (not a mere inspired record about him, as are the Christian scriptures) is perpetually in the hands and on the tongues of the faithful, a continuing miracle in its excellence, they believe, which human art is incapable of imitating. At just those points—ranging from solemn worship to superstition—at which some Christians make the sign of the cross, the Muslim will write or utter a Qur’ânic phrase. The most strikingly manifest fact about God is that he speaks to men.

3. As everyone who is acquainted with Muslim theology will be quick to point out, it is precisely in dealing with the problem of human responsibility and freedom over against God’s power that Muslim thought appears to have most signally failed. In stressing the inescapability of his judgment and the insignificance of the whims of his creatures apart from his commands, the main stream of Muslim theology has concentrated on exalting God beyond any shadow of rivalry from any created being. The definitiveness of man’s duty to him alone is thus expressed, but in the process man seems to have been stripped of his freedom of choice, God being the sole Creator of all things, even of man’s acts. Theologians have, in fact, always preserved some form of recognition of human freedom, but the problem has produced long theological quarrels and is reflected in subtle analyses on the part of the Şûfî keepers of Islâm’s inner conscience. Perhaps here again we have a case where too living a concern has made impossible a neat solution of the question. In any case, it is in terms of a penetrating interpretation of human responsibility that we must understand Islâm’s persistent sense of human *dignity*—a sense that has taken many forms, from the simple believer’s imperturbable sense of his own election to the Şûfî doctrine that the greatest saint of any

age, as the microcosmic embodiment of purest rationality, is in fact the pole, *Qutb*, round which turns the whole rational universe.

It must be pointed out that Islamic thought, while holding central an awareness of responsibility and judgment, has not failed to find important meanings in human suffering and sacrifice. Particularly in mystical poetry, the believer, as a lover, weeps over his separation from the beloved, God. In the love story of Majnûn and Laylâ, which has popularly become a religious allegory, Majnûn wastes away in the desert to skin and bones, ready to die for love of the One Beautiful. The theme that God seeks us more than we seek him is present. Again, the patient outreach of a celibate saint like Shaykh Naşîr-ad-Dîn of Delhi could be interpreted by an observer in terms of redemptive grace. But such motifs are subordinated. They are not valued as either capital or essential—Shaykh Naşîr-ad-Dîn felt himself inferior to his great master Nizâm-ad-Dîn Awliyâ', probably a more typical Muslim—and, in any case, they are interpreted in terms which express the supremacy of the law and of personal obligation before God. For the mystical lover, suffering is ordinarily no clue to the nature of God but merely incidental to his service. Even in the chief Shî'ite sect, where the suffering of the descendants of Muḥammad is a major theme and is sometimes interpreted almost in the manner of the atonement, the Law holds its place as more fundamental.

4. The type of religious experience favored in Islâm is, then, the active personal acceptance of *prophetic truth*, which is to discipline and orient one's total life. The most obvious expression of this has been in the attempt on the part of the pious to model every detail of their conduct—down to the material of their clothing—on the reported behavior of the prophet Muḥammad. The whole *sharî'a*, the sacred Law, is a concretizing of this principle both as it applies to action and to the permitted formulation of thought. Carried to the level of Şûfîsm, this becomes an ordering of the inward life through a meditation on the words of the Qur'ân as they came to Muḥammad, a meditation so intense that the states of soul experienced by Muḥammad in his penetration of Truth are re-experienced, though imperfectly, by the mystic. In Şûfî doctrine Muḥammad thus becomes a metaphysical figure, the Perfect Man, the transcendent ideal of each individual. But whether within the Şûfî tradition or in the orthodox realm of the outward Law, the ac-

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ceptance of the truths proclaimed through the prophets, and in particular through Muḥammad, becomes an exercise of soul fraught with sighs and tears for those who take their faith seriously—which, to be sure, is not necessarily a greater number than in the case of Christianity.

5. Grounded in such expectations, Muslim doctrine traces the course of spiritual life in terms of God's *transcendent unity* as reflected in history and in individuals, not his protected children but his adult servants. History begins with man's acceptance of obligation to recognize God's unity and the consequent indivisibility of men's duty—which cannot be escaped (as Muslims might suppose Christians to hope) through a divinity divided against itself, one person of which might intercede with another. Men are confronted immediately with God. It is said that when Adam was created all men were drawn out of his loins together and confronted by their creator with the query *a lastu bi-rabbi-kum*, "Am I not your Lord?"—to which all replied in affirmative recognition. Hence as each individual subsequently comes into his appointed time of life, the divine primeval challenge has been given him in his very nature as a man.

When men failed, beginning with Adam, to live up to this challenge, their guilt did not imply the corruption of their nature but rather their *straying into error*. Adam does not feel himself vile and thus hide; he feels himself to be wandering without purpose and asks for help. The remedy is not a personal redemption but divine *guidance*. Adam himself was the first prophet; there is no waiting till Moses. (A Muslim evangelist would ask *a aslamta*, "Have you submitted" to God? Divine guidance does not replace the natural reason but works through it, perfecting it; the Qur'ān has many passages in which a sort of "natural theology" is adumbrated. Nevertheless, reason is not enough; the guidance is necessary in a way that somewhat recalls the Christian notion of prevenient grace. To those who accept it, turning to God in purpose and making true efforts, it is given; from those who turn away it is withheld and they go astray, their natural reason being blinded.

Accordingly, history is seen from the time of Adam as a process of God's making his will clear to erring men and leading them aright. This is achieved through a *series of prophetic summonses to a total life pattern*, a series often thought of as increasingly perfect and certainly culminating in the Qur'ān itself. The Revelation, the divine "word of

God," *kalâm, Allâh*, is not a Life as in the Christian paradox but a clearly written *Book*.

The Qur'ân seems to most Western readers impossibly dull reading. To Muslims who read Arabic it has seemed the most beautiful composition in existence—its literary inimitability forming a unique evidentiary miracle which every generation can verify anew for itself. This contrast in attitude rises partly from the inadequacy of any translation and yet more, perhaps, from the way in which the two groups read the book. The Westerner tries to read it at a sitting, to acquire information or possibly for incidental inspiration. But the Qur'ân presents no concrete information and no new arguments; it is repetitious and lacks unity of development. The Westerner soon tires of it. The Muslim reads it, on the contrary, verse by verse. If it is recited at one sitting, this is not for the sake of its contents but as a pious act. (The impious, consistently enough, are rarely encouraged to read it—there are more appropriate ways of reaching them with the truth.) It is read more as an act of homage to God than for information or even for inspiration (though this does enter in); hence the great role of Qur'ân memorization, unparalleled with the Bible. The Qur'ân was so used from the beginning; this is not a case of later devout misuse. The books of the Bible always have their best impact when read as wholes; the reverse is the case with the Qur'ân.

When read as first intended, as a vehicle for worship rather than primarily as an exposition of truths, its very incongruousness and repetitiousness become virtues; that is, almost every element which goes to make up its message is somehow present in any given passage. Its very narratives are not written in the form of stories but in the form of brief, discontinuous statements, holding before the mind the relevance of stories already known or elsewhere explained. Its relatively few legal passages lend themselves more readily to starting a ripple of moral reflection than to subserving technical juridical decisions. Wherever it is opened, the Book is found to be insisting on a single message in every possible context. This message is such that to reaffirm it with one's whole will constitutes an act of worship.

So read, the Qur'ân reveals itself as a comprehensive cosmic challenge, monumentally delivered. It is at once more comprehensive in outline and more involved in the details of individual living than are its closest analogues, the Old Testament prophets, taken in themselves.

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It is rather like a pep talk from the coach of all life—or, rather, a series of such pep talks all run together. It maintains an ultimate perspective on every point that arises, large or small. This it does even verse by verse in its sonorous endings recalling the power or the mercy of God and, more substantially, in the very mixture of passages exalted and prosaic. In Arabic, at least, the exalted passages manage to win out in such contests and give their tone to the whole. This can be seen in the Chapter of Light, which contains the most ethereal passage in the Qur'ān juxtaposed with what might seem some of its most sordid, dealing with matters of etiquette, with sexual decency, and in particular with an accusation of infidelity levied against a wife of the Prophet. The exalted effect is aided by an effective use of language, which lends an untranslatable dignity even to quite ordinary ideas, so that the phrases seem to take on a more general reference; much of real substance is lost when the thought is cast into less noble rhythms in another tongue.

The Qur'ān expresses in this way a total vision of the natural and historical cosmos and of human responsibility therein. This vision is brought out largely in terms of the experience of an individual man (Muḥammad) and of the entire community about him, an experience dominated in turn by the challenge of the very Qur'ān which is its commentary, an experience, moreover, which—both during the Qur'ānic revelations and afterward—was marked by a unique historical success. This intimate interweaving with the far-reaching experience it illuminates, perhaps even more than its single-mindedness and the monumentality of its formal impact, accounts for the enormous power of the Qur'ān as the charter and touchstone of a concrete historical community which has tried in its generations to express the universal.

The Qur'ān in its literary form, then, is to be compared not with the form of the Bible but with the form of the life of Christ, which was likewise interwoven with the life of the early community. All the natural features of the life of Christ, as experienced by the Church, point to a single culminating moment, essentially beyond this world's life, into which all believers are to enter at last. On the contrary, though there is development in the Qur'ān, every moment of it is equally devoted to the reorientation of this life in its very naturalness. The contrast is shown most keenly in comparing what happens to the soul in a reading of the Qur'ān and in a Communion with Christ—

the penetrating of divine admonition on the one hand, on the other the assumption into divine atonement.

6. In prophecy the ancestral *law and custom of men*, distorted by their error and made pointless by their inturmed pride and their many divisions, is *reoriented toward a universal justice*. The prophetic Law transcends nature, not by replacing the natural condition, but by purifying it and giving it meaning; for nature, forever created anew by God, is not essentially corrupt. The demands of the Law are adapted to man's natural capacities—all children are born Muslims, before their parents mislead them. God's mercy covers the believers and their concerns in this world on much the same basis as in the other. The sense of the dignity of the natural man extends to a certain distrust of the conception of a soul; the soul as a semi-independent spiritual substance is played down, and when the notion of a purely "spiritual" resurrection appears among Muslims it is condemned as a Christian heresy. A man is an organic whole.

As a mere portion of creation, to be sure, a man in himself is nothing. He is at best a concourse of atoms. Insofar, however, as man in his very primeval nature (though he may forfeit this status) is a believer, accepting by God's will the obligations of responsibility laid upon him, he acquires a special noble status among created things. He has inimitable dignity as a servant, *'abd*, responsible before God. The very angels must bow down to Adam. Hence in part the famous "pride" of Muslims, their sense of dignity as believers; as true believers they are in a sense more truly men than those who have corrupted the initial faith.

Hence also the persistent sense of Muslim solidarity against such as have not yet believed. For the obligation laid upon men is above all that of ordering the world aright. This the Muslim community must do jointly. Not only individual believers but the prophetic community as a whole is blessed in this life and the next, destined to rule over all the world—including the older, corrupt communities of men. The true believer is the *vicegerent of God in the creation*.

Every Muslim is responsible for "commanding the good and forbidding the wrong," on the basis of prophetic truth, in the community where he finds himself. Hence, the measure of human living is the *jihād*, the social struggle. The *jihād* is in the first instance the struggle

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with the enemies of the believing community—the “holy war” (a war, it must be recalled, the purpose of which is not in principle normally conversion but the establishment of an Islamic social order within which non-Muslims have their place). But the attitude extends to the struggle to purify the life within the community. Perhaps the most frequent use of the concept in major campaigns has been on the part of reformers within the Islamic society—or of rulers who used reform as an excuse for war on other Muslims. (Finally, the “greater *jihād*” refers to the struggle of a man against the passions within himself.) The truest Muslim is he who devotes his life to extending, in every sense, the sway of truth.

The full response to the prophetic summons on the part of the believer, accordingly, is a serious effort to achieve the pattern set by the Prophet, to achieve it for himself in particular but also, and as a necessary consequence, for his people and for mankind as a whole. The results indeed are up to God; what counts is a man’s striving, his purpose—his single devotion; if in trying he makes a mistake, he is credited with the effort.

The *Şûfis* in their insistent meditation of prophecy find still deeper aspects of the believer’s condition. Men are responsible not only for outward acts but for an inward recognition of God’s single and undivided sovereignty. The importance of such a recognition may take precedence over that of any act. It is said that Satan refused to bow down to Adam when the angels were so commanded and was therefore damned. Some *Şûfis* have explained that he was refusing to worship other than God even at God’s command and under penalty of God’s punishment; he chose to revere God from Hell rather than compromise his devotion. In the end Satan will be acknowledged as the truest of all the angels. It is through such single-mindedness that the believer, who as creature is simply nothing, at last becomes united in knowledge and love with God, who is all Truth. But, as on the level of the *sharī‘a*, the individual experience is only the starting point. Beyond the outer solidarity of the sacred Law, *Şûfis* have seen an inward solidarity in which every person, in the measure of his personal approach to God, comprises a part of a great invisible hierarchy whose summit is formed by the *Qutb*, the supreme saint, the Perfect Man of the age, in whose microcosmic existence human society is fulfilled—

and with it the whole of creation. Thus human vicegerency in the world takes on not only a historical but a metaphysical aspect.

7. Islām, with its *jihād*, is in fact, on earth, a universal and never-ending personal and social struggle. The first men who entered into this struggle emigrated from their homes in Mecca to form a new community on a prophetic basis at Medina. Ever since, those who have responded to the prophetic summons have undertaken to help maintain what has been in intention a *total political society built upon prophetic standards*, which is ultimately to be the order of the whole natural world. Every aspect of piety is to be channeled through this total brotherhood. There is private prayer, but it is subordinated to the public prayer, which is not a communion to redeem the communicant but above all an act of recognition of God's common lordship through recitation of the Qur'ān. The community's text is the *ḥadīth*, a record, like the Bible, of the community's history, but the *ḥadīth* concentrates not on a personal divine intervention but on Muḥammad's prophetic decisions as norms for everyday living. Lives of Muḥammad as such, however highly revered, did not become canonical.

The community is not a sacramental body set off from a profane world—there is no church in the Christian sense, nor are there any ordained priests. Whether in the law of inheritance or in that of marriage or in that of ritual ablutions, whoever in a given company of believers best knows the sacred Law is in principle the authority for the occasion. The community is ideally a single *homogeneous brotherhood with a common witness* and with a common mission to purify the world, incumbent equally on every believer and at every moment. In contrast to the Christian tendency to hierarchism, Muslims have had an equally persistent tendency toward a radical egalitarianism. So important is the unity of social life that, even when the mystically inclined retire in some degree to their contemplative lives, they have been expected to continue to fulfil all social obligations and, in particular, to marry.

In pursuit of this common mission, Muslims have insisted on social criteria for the community's identity more than on doctrinal and sacramental ones. Theology, in the broad sense of intellectual discipline of the experience of faith, has been intensely cultivated. Yet dogma and especially creed in the narrower sense have been neglected as compared

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with Christianity, in which they form the intellectual aspect of a sacramental relationship. Membership in Islām is not through a sacramental rite but through visible allegiance to common symbols—the recognition of Muḥammad as prophet and, above all, of Mecca as *qibla* in prayer. Granted these essentials, considerable scope is allowed for variation in personal convictions and even in cult practices. (In thus replacing a ceremonial tie among its members with one essentially symbolic, Islām seems to reflect a highly developed level of abstraction. Here we have a further instance of the relative remoteness of Islām from primitive world views with their magical realism. The same may be said of its insistence on the unity of nature and of social life in contrast to the ancient dichotomy between everyday reality on the one hand and the sacred, mysterious realm of dream souls on the other.)

Since every political problem is in principle in the fullest sense a religious question, the source of the earliest and most abiding doctrinal disputes (notably that between the Shī'ites and Sunnīs) has not been the interpretation of subjective experience but the form to be taken by community leadership. Each of the faithful has a personal obligation to decide for himself what government is legitimate—a question which has led to such subordinate questions as how sinful a man must be to disqualify himself as a ruler or even as a Muslim. It is typical that wherever Islām has gone, from the very beginning, there has been an unremitting concern to preserve the history of the community. This has not been ecclesiastical history, nor has it been based, as has sometimes been the case in Christianity, on a sense of progression of divine dispensations from age to age, with overtones of cosmic drama. The Muslims have indeed their eschatology, but they have not allowed all history to be subsumed in an eschatological romance. Their religiously inspired chronicles have been concerned with how the Muslims have fulfilled their responsibilities in various worldly circumstances and have traced throughout its vast areas the continuity of the community and the solidarity of its witness from generation to generation.

This concern repeatedly takes an active form. Again and again in every age, at the hands of theologians recognized as raised up for the special needs of each century (*mujaddids*) or, above all, under the lead of militant reformers and conquerors, the effort has been made to remold Islamic society nearer to its ideal. It is with a sense of historic

mission that new *mahdis* campaign against the corruption of the religious leaders themselves as against all worldly injustices.

The ritual of the public prayer is emblematic of the community sense of cosmic purpose. Though in daily life distinctions other than those of piety—in principle the only distinction allowed—do creep in, five times a day but particularly in the great gathering on Friday, pious merchant and beggar pray side by side in the ordered rows of worshippers, with identical disciplined words and gestures. Each carries out the whole prayer for himself but in unison with all his brothers. And once a year as many as are able go on pilgrimage to Mecca to join with the wider community from all the world in the common rituals at the Ka'ba.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE TWO FAITHS

After the contrast brought out by such a parallel tabulation, it is worthwhile recalling that the everyday piety of most people seems to depend more on class position and individual personality than on religious affiliation. What we have traced is a set of ideal tendencies which are always influencing the direction piety takes and which largely account for the peculiarities of each tradition. Since these are in some measure the extreme tendencies, those most distinctive of each faith, the wide overlap even in ideal orientation is no doubt not fully brought out here.

Nevertheless, the tabulation can suggest explanations for some significant misunderstandings between Muslims and Christians. In fact, the comparison can be summed up in terms of the most serious difficulties which informed adherents of each religion are likely to find in the other. These difficulties reach very deep. Such a summary will underline the need for caution in any attempt to settle the debate between the two faiths by assimilating the two into a common basic plan which one of them may perhaps fulfil more adequately than the other.

At this point we may enlarge our perspective a little to prevent a possible misunderstanding. Among the great universal religions, Christianity and Islâm are members of a larger group, the Western religions, which contrast with those which arose in or were influenced by India. This Western group includes the three Abrahamic faiths and also another family, associated with Iran, which includes Zoroastrianism and Manicheanism. All these faiths have been in constant contact and fre-

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quent interchange with each other. In contrast to the religions of the Gangetic plain, they all see the human story as proceeding within a single world from a moment of creation to a final universal judgment. Accordingly, there is sufficient similarity among them to give certain contrasts validity.

We may thus try to reduce the contrast between Islâm and Christianity to something more generic and therefore simpler to evaluate, by selecting two types of basic faith. These may be labeled (rather unjustly) "the this-worldly" and "the other-worldly." On this basis, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Islâm are this-worldly in contrast to Christianity and Manicheanism. It is a temptation, then, for Christians (countering Manicheanism on a different level) to turn against Islâm (or Zoroastrianism) the same formula they have used since Paul against Judaism as a legalistic, unspiritualized faith. But the essential incommensurability of two faiths is not just a matter of one such contrast but of all aspects of their spiritual frameworks at once. Islâm contrasts, from this point of view, as radically with Judaism or Zoroastrianism as with Christianity.

Medieval Judaism and Islâm do have much in common which markedly contrasts with Christianity, and up to a point the difficulties of mutual intelligibility are indeed alike as between Islâm or Judaism on the one hand and Christianity on the other. Islâm may well have developed on the basis of Jewish rather than Christian notions of what a religion should be like. For Christians (and Manicheans) a religion is a sacramental church with a sacred dogma *acting upon* a profane world; for Jews and Muslims and Zoroastrians it is a body of universal law and a community which is bound thereto and which *is* the world at its best. Such a distinction is radical.

But the Islamic sense of mission is quite different from that of Judaism (or Zoroastrianism). Islâm did not turn itself into an Ishmaelism corresponding to the Jewish Israelism, despite apparent temptations to do so. (The Qur'ân might have seemed to allow this, and social history favored it.) Both in its belief that every people has received prophets and in its belief that with the coming of Muḥammad the whole world is to be reordered on the basis of God's word, Islâm rejects the crucial notion of a "chosen people" witnessing to God as a select scattered remnant on the earth and replaces it with a unique concentration on the prophetic personality of Muḥammad and his

universal message. The Law, therefore, is no longer an expression of fidelity to a people's peculiar troth but more nearly a practical instrument of universal politics. It is deliberately made feasible for the ordinary community of men and regarded as sound mundane practice at least as strongly as ritual. This contrast in sense of mission between Islâm and Judaism is as far-reaching in its implications as is the similarity in their ways of conceiving a religious community. (Here, where Islâm and Judaism differ, there is an apparent similarity between the all-inclusive universalisms of Christianity and of Islâm, but from another vantage we see that precisely at this point the New Israel, with its sense of its own divine election from the unregenerate world, stands nearer to the old Israel than to Islâm, with its world-ordering social vision.) The contrast between Christianity and Islâm, then, must be understood independently of that between Christianity and Judaism, even if at times along corresponding lines.

Although Zoroastrianism under the Sassanians made, indeed, something of the same universal political claim as is found in Islâm, Islâm does not merely perpetuate a Middle Eastern tradition as a continuer of Zoroastrianism. The latter faith was founded on priesthood, monarchy, and social hierarchy; historically it was more oriented to agriculture than to trade. Its basic problems were again different. The uniqueness of Islâm, as of no other faith, is irreducible.

Leaving aside other contrasts as raising still other difficulties, we may sum up the mutual complaints of Islâm and Christianity in terms of the nature of the spiritual process, of the religious community, and of the divine being. The great stumbling block for Muslims—as for the Jews whom Paul had in mind—is of course the doctrine of the Trinity and all that is associated with it in expressing God's suffering love: incarnation, crucifixion, atonement. In teaching these intricacies, Christianity seems unfaithful to the transcendent unity of God. On the other hand, Christians see in this difficulty of Muslims an evidence of the essential unperceptiveness of Islâm and are bound to feel that all Paul's objections to the Jewish Law apply equally to Islâm with its *shari'a*.

Christians want to transcend the suffering and guilt implicit in the human condition and have found redemption in Grace; to them, Islâm, with its exaltation of the words of a book, of formulated rules, shows too little insight into the infinite variations and self-contradictions of the human spirit, as if Islâm supposed that to know and will the good

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sufficed for effective goodness, and as if it submerged any further concern for human individuality beneath a demand for an ideally static social conformity. Yet it is precisely the concern of Islâm for society as a whole that may seem from a Muslim viewpoint to show its superiority. Muslims want to fulfil the purposiveness in creation and have found divine guidance to this end in prophecy; they must feel impatient with what seems the Christians' asocially subjective preoccupation with individual personal problems, when such problems can be given their proper perspective only in a faith that is not afraid to cope with the great problems of world order.

Christians object that to build one's community on the Law of a Book rather than on a Life of Love means running the risk of having a society lacking in flexibility and an ethic which not only fails to evoke the highest in human potentialities but is even tainted with violence, with servitude, and finally with rigidity. Yet Muslims have retorted that the Christian fellowship in effect leaves other social institutions to the sphere of ungodliness, that the revered Christian ethic, in which personal tenderness nearly excludes historical concern, is not only subjective but unrealistic for the ordinary man and lacking even in any challenge to greatness of achievement. They may suspect that the whole redemptive system of which it is an indis severable part is actually founded on an escapist irrationalism which, overwhelmed by life's sorrows, seizes on bright moments of faith as if they were the whole of life.

Christians see in the unyielding inviolability of the Qur'ânic God, author of good and evil, an invitation not only to fatalism but to a disregard of the inherent inconsistencies and tensions within existence, which give living its tragic, personal meaning. Muslims see in the personal involvements of a Mediator within a Trinity sentimental, wishful thinking which leads to a compromise with truth and, in consequence, a failure to appreciate the full vital meaning of human responsibility.

On each side, what most seriously shocks the other is not a secondary development but an essential aspect of the religious experience. Without it, nothing is left of a concrete way of worship but only, at most, some fine general words and sentiments. The two positions are therefore incompatible; each, from the other's point of view, is untenable. This is not just a matter of selected key dogmas but, as we have seen, of the very structure of faith. In each faith—and the same would be

true of Judaism or of Zoroastrianism—all its various elements, whatever their separate strengths or weaknesses, fit together to build up its total orientation, an orientation already present in the basic spiritual experiences most cultivated by each, centering on which gives them their consistency and strength, whether the personal acceptance of redemptive grace or that of prophetic truth. Without this over-all orientation which endows their legitimacy, the separate details lose much of their validity and can even be accused of falsity.

It is obvious that it will not be easy to reduce the two faiths to a common denominator allowing a facile syncretism or an eclectic choice of what might seem most desirable in each. Any common ground would not include all the essentials and perhaps not anything essential in any serious, concrete sense. But for this very reason, the more mildly conciliatory positions which nevertheless claim superiority of one faith or the other are also not easy to maintain. One religion can hardly absorb the traditions and insights of the other into its own more encompassing fold, as some Christians have lately suggested. For this also requires some sort of common ground which should include, in a positive way, if not all the essentials, at least some of them. But what is and is not essential depends upon the integrating principles of each faith; and these are in contradiction. Only in some genuinely higher synthesis—which cannot be said to be currently available—might a true unity be possible.

POSSIBLE OBJECTIVE WAYS OF JUDGING THE TWO RELIGIONS

With our initial dilemma thus confirmed, we must remind ourselves that it is not easy to escape the uneasiness of the confrontation by a return to a simple dismissal of one or the other religion, at least if that would suppose some objective judgment of their relative ultimate value. The instinct of sensitive men is still justified in avoiding this. There are no satisfactory criteria for weighing the two faiths that do not depend upon one's own religious convictions—in effect, upon the orientation of one faith or the other.

Even "fruits" are an unsatisfactory basis for such a comparison. In the eyes of most of the world, after all, the events of this century have shattered the pretensions we Europeans once had to moral superiority, yet without giving others any grounds for complacency.

A comparison of depth of insight carries us little further. At least if

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the great *Ṣūfī* systems could be left aside, one could gain an impression of Islām as a sober, balanced faith but one relatively confined to the common-sense level, while Christianity would present a possibly eccentric profundity. But for the medieval period when the faiths are most properly comparable, before the conditions of the modern world forced retrenchment or re-evaluation of the heritage in both faiths, a subtle *Ṣūfī* thinker like Ibn-al-Arabī can no more be excised from Islām than an Augustine from Christianity. And if a man like Iqbāl in modern India does not yet present a challenge on the level of a Kierkegaard (or a Buber) in the modern West, still we cannot rule out the possibility of a major Muslim cosmo-political thinker, as free of apologetics as of literalism or of communal exclusivism, when Islām shall have more fully and freely entered into modern life. (In comparing any non-Western cultural channel with those of the modern West, an appeal is inescapable to potentialities envisaged as future for better or worse!)

In any case, of course, the "depth" of a tradition cannot confidently be sounded from outside. Even within the faith few persons can claim to have begun to exhaust its potentialities after a lifetime of devotion; it should take even more than two lifetimes to compare the two faiths directly. The problem of comparing two devotional traditions are much greater than those, say, of comparing two musical traditions, if only because a devotional tradition requires an effective allegiance which a musical tradition does not.

One might compare dependence on elements of objective falsity (granting the possible validity of religious insight as such). Those long pointed out in the Christian system have received careful and often honest attention from Christians. Muslims, and not only Muslims, sometimes too readily assume that in this regard, at least, Islām is relatively free of nonsense. But Islām has probably been neither more nor less than Christianity bound up with untenable human conceptions. Perhaps a Christian can be forgiven for believing that a unitarian deity, despite the apparent simplicity of the conception, presents an even more difficult metaphysical problem than does a Trinity. But even on the historical level the interpretation of Easter and Pentecost presents a more limited (if also a keener) problem than does the interpretation of the whole of the Qur'ān and of Muhammad's prophetic life in cosmic terms. It is not so much any particular earthly facts that cause diffi-

culty—as that Muslims, like Christians at least till modern times, have been tied down by a timid literalism, certainly alien to Muhammad's own spirit, which has refused to recognize fully the degree to which Muhammad's life and the Qur'ân itself were bound up with the level of understanding prevalent among the Arabs of Muhammad's time. This literalism has obscured the extent to which the wider, living prophetic tradition of the Middle East in fact contributed to the illumination of the Qur'ân, the production of the sacred Law, and even the formation of the revered figure of Muhammad himself as it appears in *ḥadīth*. Especially among some modern Muslims, an unreal, romantic conception of early Islām results. But the falsities resulting from this literalism require in principle (for those who have come to see its limitations) only courage for them to be torn away. The essentials of the Muslim tradition could presumably survive the abandonment of a great many untenable details, provided it retains, with whatever modifications, its historical anchorage and is not simply diluted to a generalized idealism.

Even a comparison of the relative success of the two faiths in their own different terms, so far as this is visible historically, is likely to be indecisive. Both faiths have their characteristic failings. Muslims have preached social order, but their most obvious failure, to the outside observer, has lain in their recurrent inability to establish sound, enlightened government. Christians have preached love, and one of the most striking features of their history, at least before recent times, has been their inability to maintain fellowship even within the Church. Christianity has been marked by more and deeper bitterness of schism and persecution than has any other religion. In each of the two cases the failure could in part be traced to the very form in which the faith embodied its ideals. The rigid association of the Muslim Sacred Law with a particular historical situation in Muhammad's Arabia was a laudable effort to avoid dissipation into uncontrollable theorizing, but it surely hindered the flexibility required for effective application of the Law elsewhere. Likewise, the insistence of the Church on doctrinal and sacramental uniformity, for the sake of maintaining a sacred fellowship free from distortions, gave wide scope to the most unredeemed passions. But in each case the failures have been only partial and have been largely subject to extraneous historical influences positive and negative.

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Muslims and Christians are not only in no position to judge one another; probably, in fact, both groups have much growing to do before there can be full spiritual fellowship between them. This fact should not hinder an active search for such fellowship as is attainable. But this search will not necessarily be furthered by facile solutions. Only with a recognition of the need for the intellectual tension that comes from recognition of unresolved truth—the suspended judgment of the concerned man, not that of him who has given up seeking—are we likely to undergo the necessary creative growth. If they wish such growth, Christians and Muslims must learn to seek truth together even while retaining as few pleasant illusions as possible about their unity.

Meanwhile, we Christians can at least consider what such a parallelism as that here attempted, for all its distortion, may suggest about our own faith. In focusing our attention, in some sort, on suffering and sacrifice, we may at least have risked seeing other aspects of spiritual life slightly out of focus. In stressing the experience of grace and in choosing the redemptive fellowship as channel for our spiritual life, we may have had to understress or to distort the experience of rational responsibility and to forego or postpone the goal of a prophetically integrated civil order. It can be charged that from the beginning we have had to explain away prophecy, as Paul seems to have done by making it a mere witness to the mission of Christ, and to keep a strict check on any purely personal mysticism lest it dispense in the end with the Mediator. These two complementary channels of transcendent challenge have on the contrary become central to Islām and have created in it a whole spiritual world which we find alien and not fully comprehensible.

JEWES AND MOSLEMS

The tolerance which the Islamic tradition showed—not in theory alone but in practice as well—toward the infidels, the “protected” (*dhimmi*) Jews and Christians, is well known. In several places in the Koran, Mohammed proclaimed the inalienable right of these two “Peoples of Scripture” to worship the common God of Abraham in their very imperfect fashion. The passages in question ordinarily mentioned *Christians and Jews*, and the imprecations which in another context (in the “Sura of the Cow,” for example) the Prophet hurled against the Jews of Medina who would not recognize him, in no way altered the cardinal principle developed later by the commentators in the *hadith* (“tradition”). The two categories of *dhimmi* were placed under the same legal and political control. In conformity with the “pact” of Caliph Omar (the second successor to Mohammed) the *dhimmis* had to recognize Moslem supremacy, lavish many signs of subordination and respect upon the true believers, behave as loyal subjects, and above all, pay tribute. By this means the free exercise of their cult under the protection of Islam was assured.

The facts show, however, that the condition of the Christians during the period immediately after the Arab conquest was much better than

Translated by Wells F. Chamberlin.

that of the Jews, especially in the territories seized from Byzantium. Three centuries of Christian domination had relegated the Jews to the foot of the social ladder, and this situation lasted for some time. It was intensified because the former administrative organization was at first left in place by the Arabs, who did not have the indispensable office workers and technicians. According to certain traditional accounts, once the conquest was completed Caliph Omar's lieutenants begged him to leave the Christian specialists in their jobs. "Money has grown so plentiful that they alone are capable of counting it," Abou Mouça is said to have written him. "In my province I have a Christian scribe without whom I cannot carry out the tax collection," Moawia is said to have reported to him.¹ It is typical that as late as 693 the official tongue of the Ommiad Caliphate continued to be Greek! And it is not at all surprising that Christianity enjoyed a great prestige in the eyes of the conquerors.

The Caliphs of the great period were the first to struggle against this Christian preponderance. A circumstantial document, the *Reply to the Christians*, by the great writer al-Jahiz (composed no doubt to please Caliph Motawakkil) furnishes us information of the greatest interest:

I shall begin to enumerate the causes which made the Christians more liked by the masses than the Magians, and made men consider them more sincere than the Jews, more endeared, less treacherous, less unbelieving, and less deserving of punishment. For all this there are manifold and evident causes. They are patent to one who searches for them, concealed to one who shuns investigation.²

Al-Jahiz perceived a first cause in the prestige of the Christians, who founded or conquered many kingdoms, and who gave the world numerous scholars and wise men:

Moreover, our masses began to realize that the Christian dynasties were enduring in power, and that a great number of Arabs were adhering to their faith; that the daughters of Byzantium bore children to the Moslem rulers, and that among the Christians were men versed in speculative theology, medicine, and astronomy. Consequently they became in their estimation philosophers and men of learning, whereas they observed none of these sciences among the Jews.

1. M. Belin, "Fetwa relatif à la condition des dhimmis," *Journal asiatique*, 1851, pp. 428 ff.

2. This and the following quotations from Joshua Finkel, "A Risāla of al-Jāhiz," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XLVII (1927), 311-34.

The cause for the lack of science among the Jews lies in the fact that the Jews consider philosophic speculation to be unbelief, and Kalām theology an innovation leading to doubt.

On the other hand, al-Jahiz continues, the high social position of the Christians is another title to popular admiration:

they are secretaries and servants to kings, physicians to nobles, perfumers, and money changers, whereas the Jews are found to be but dyers, tanners, cuppers, butchers, and cobblers. Our people observing thus the occupations of the Jews and the Christians concluded that the religion of the Jews must compare as unfavorably as do their professions, and that their unbelief must be the foulest of all. . . .

The third reason for the popularity of the Christians was the social mimicry which they practiced, according to al-Jahiz:

we know that they ride highly bred horses, and dromedary camels, play polo . . . wear fashionable silk garments, and have attendants to serve them. They call themselves Hasan, Husayn, 'Abbās, Fadl, and 'Alī, and employ also their forenames. There remains but that they call themselves Mohammed, and employ the forename 'Abūl-Kāsim. For this very fact they were liked by the Moslems

This last remark touches upon a delicate subject—conversions to Islam for reasons of convenience. The Moslems were not deceived by them. Caliph al-Māmūn said:

their convictions, I am well aware, are just the opposite of that which they profess. They belong to a class who embrace Islam, not from any love of this our religion, but thinking thereby to gain access to my Court and share in the honour, wealth, and power of the Realm; they have no inward persuasion of that which they outwardly profess. . . . And, indeed, I know of one and another . . . who were Christians, and embraced Islam unwillingly. They are neither Moslems nor Christians.³

We shall see later the different ways in which the Jews, making compromises with the law of Moses, also conformed to the mores and beliefs of the dominant society; however, a tradition of life in dispersion under foreign dominations, already a thousand years old, had equipped them better for resisting the temptations of apostasy. Moreover, the meticulous piety of orthodox Jews had become so proverbial that the poet Abu Abd el Rahman could risk this comparison: "The appearance of the sun enchants us quite as much as the coming of the Sab-

3. Cf. Sir William Muir, *The Apology of al Kindy* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1882), p. xii.

bath delights the Jews." This piety had the gift of irritating some other writers and, in this connection, the Jews became the target of converging attacks, for to the animosity of the true faithful was added the hostility of the skeptics and the unbelievers, who were very audacious during the first centuries of Islam. And so the great Andalusian theologian Ibn-Hazm mocked the formalistic practices of the rabbis, describing them as follows:

The Jews are dispersed from the East to the West, and from the South to the North. When one of their communities is visited by a co-religionist who has come from afar, he shows rigorous observance and displays an excess of ceremonial precautions. If he is himself a Doctor of the Law, he begins to dictate his precepts, and to forbid this and that. The more he complicates the Jews' existence, the louder they exclaim: "Truly, here is a real scholar!" For it is the one who imposes on them the strictest abstinences who is considered by them to be the most learned.

At the opposite extreme, the great poet Abu'l-'Alá—who composed a parody of the Koran which he asserted to be superior to the original—aggressively flaunted his unbelief in these terms:

All that ye tell of God is vamped-up news,
Old fables artfully set out by Jews. . . .

One might say that in the Islam of the great period there was an anti-Judaism of the "Voltaireian" or "lay" variety as well as a "theological" anti-Judaism.⁴

It is easily understood why the usual term "anti-Semitism" is not proper here. Indeed, the affinities of language and culture between Jews and Arabs established a particular kind of bond between them. In his clairvoyant analysis, al-Jahiz, a consummate psychologist, did not fail to take this into account in explaining the lack of popularity of the Jews in his time:

Man indeed hates the one whom he knows, turns against the one whom he sees, opposes the one whom he resembles, and becomes observant of the faults of those with whom he mingles; the greater the love and intimacy, the greater the hatred and estrangement.

4. Abu Abd el Rahman, see *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale d'El-Bekri*, ed. Slane (Paris, 1859), p. 158; Ibn-Hazm, see I. Goldziher, "Proben muhammedanischer Polemik gegen den Talmud," *Jeschurun*, IX (1873), 44; Abu 'l-'Alá al-Ma'aarí, see R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 175.

Later, especially against the background of the wars against Byzantium and the first crusades, when Christians often played the role of "fifth column," the situation was progressively reversed in favor of the Jews, the "Semitic cousins." We must look more closely at this idea of "kinship," which is so emotionally loaded and thus constitutes an historical factor.

In truth, nothing permits us to assert that the Jews were more closely "related" to the Arab conquerors than to their neighbors, the Christian fellahs, or to the whole of the Byzantine or Persian population. Moreover, such a biological ("racial") kinship, even if it had existed, can never be proved. We know that in the opinion of specialists, contemporary peoples represent indefinable mixtures and that probably the same was true in antiquity. Therefore, when understood in this way, the question of kinship is meaningless and consequently uninteresting. But linguistically, Arabic is from the same rootstock as Hebrew and Aramaic, the lingua franca of the time. (These are Semitic languages whose particular structure tends to orient thought in a similar manner.)⁵

The tradition of the common origin of the Jews and the Arabs has its source, as we all know, in the Book of Genesis. Ishmael, Abraham's first-born, who was driven into the wilderness with his mother Hagar, is said to have become the ancestor of the Arabs (the patriarch is also said to have sent "toward the West" the six sons he had later by

5. Louis Massignon has explained as follows the meaning which this kinship has for the development of religious thought: "... the general grammatical conditions (vocabulary, morphology, syntax) of our Indo-European languages determine a presentation of the idea which is quite different from that which it must assume in the Semitic languages. The *Aryan* presentation of the idea ... is periphrastic, and is made by means of words with unstable, shaded contours, with modifiable endings adapted to appositions and combinations; here the verb tenses soon became relative to the agent, 'egocentric,' 'polytheistic.' Finally, the word order is didactic, established in a hierarchy of broad periods, by graduated conjunctions. The *Semitic* presentation of the idea is *gnomic* and uses rigid words, with unchangeable, always perceptible roots, admitting only a few modalizations, all of them internal and abstract interpolated consonants, for the meaning, vocalic nuances, for the acceptance. ... The verb tenses, even today, are 'absolute,' and concern only the action; they are 'theocentric,' asserting the transcendency and the immanence of the sole Agent. Finally, the word order is 'lyrical,' broken up into jerky, condensed, autonomous formulae. This is the cause of misunderstanding for those who, not knowing how to enjoy the powerful and explosive concision of the Semitic tongues, say they are unsuited to mysticism whereas they are the tongues of the revelation of the transcendent God, of the Prophets and of the Psalms" (*Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* [Paris, 1954], p. 48).

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Keturah, another concubine; see Genesis 25:1-6). In Isaiah (21:13) the Arab caravans are called "caravans of Dedanites"—another proof of kinship for the commentators, since "Dedanite" meant cousin. Furthermore, Moslems are generally called Ishmaelites in the Jewish sources. The Koran also adopts a similar interpretation: Not only is Abraham the common ancestor of the Jews and the Arabs, but he and his son Ishmael built the Temple of Mecca together (Sura 2:121). Numerous verses of the Koran are devoted to the glorification of the Jewish patriarchs and prophets; for example, to cite Sura 6:84-86:

and among the descendants of Abraham [we guided] David and Solomon, and Job and Joseph, and Moses and Aaron: Thus do we recompense the righteous:

And Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias: all were just persons:

And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonas and Lot: all these have we favoured above mankind.

Later, Islamic theology was formulated, particularly in Bagdad—that is, in Mesopotamia, which for centuries had been the stronghold of Jewish tradition and where the Babylonian Talmud was developed. Many an analogy of construction has been cited between the Talmud and the "hadith" or interpretative commentary of the Koran, to which Jews who had been converted to Islam (among them Abdallah ben Salem and Kaab al-Ahbar) contributed, determining its form and methods. And the folklore of the early centuries of Islam was enriched from the Jewish stock, with its marvelous stories of the Haggadah about the patriarchs and the prophets. These legends, known under the significant title of "Israyilli'at," have remained popular to our day. Thus the awareness of a kinship between Jews and Arabs was confirmed in different matters and in different ways. Let us bear in mind that the jealous barrier which rises between the circumcised and the uncircumcised was not, in this case, playing its indefinable but sure role, nor were the observances concerning the pure and the impure and the food prohibitions sources of irritation. In the final analysis, all these multiple factors must have contributed to the rapid improvement of the prestige and social status of the Jews.

There are numerous legends and sayings attesting to the fact that the Jews preferred Islam's domination to any other. People even went so far as to put into the mouth of Rab (one of the earliest third century codifiers of the Talmud) this prophecy: "Rather under Ishmael than under a foreigner!" According to a book of revelations dating from

about 750 ("The Secret Visions of Rabbi Simon ben Yochai"), the "Kingdom of Ishmael" was destined by God to re-establish the House of David upon its throne, after having overthrown "the domination of Edom" (that is, the domination of the Christians). A legend told that the exilarch Bostanaï, first head of the Mesopotamian Jews under Moslem domination, was formally placed on the throne by Caliph Omar, and Omar was said to have had this descendant of King David marry a captive Persian princess.

The quasi-royal powers of the exilarchs and the prestige they enjoyed at the court of the caliphs are excellent evidence of the respect which the Moslems showed for the House of David. A Talmudist of the tenth century, Nathan ha-Bibli, has left us the following description:

When the exilarch leaves his abode, he travels in a fine carriage, accompanied by a suite of some fifteen persons and many slaves. Like the other palace officials, he never goes forth without his retinue. If he has some business matter to present to the caliph, he requests an audience. When he enters the palace, the caliph's servants rush forward to meet him, and while they are leading him to the royal apartments, he distributes small coins among them. He kneels before the caliph, but the prince signals to his servants to raise him up and to lead him toward the seat reserved for him. The caliph then inquires about the health of his visitor and the matter which has caused his visit. The exilarch then asks to speak, bows before the caliph according to ancient custom, and eloquently seeks to convince him, until he acquiesces in his demand. This done, the exilarch takes leave of the caliph and returns home, his heart light and his brow serene.

Benjamin of Tudela, the famous twelfth century traveler, was likewise amazed, in his Jewish *amour propre*, by such glory:

The Prince of Believers . . . has ordered both Jews and Ishmaelites to stand, as a sign of respect, before him [the exilarch Daniel], and to bow to him. The same order is given to all other peoples, of whatever belief they may be. Anyone who does the contrary is punished with a hundred blows! When this Daniel goes forth to find the king, he is accompanied by a great number of horsemen, both Jews and Gentiles, with a man at their head shouting: "Make way for the lord, the son of David, how just is he!"

After visiting all the countries of the Orient, Benjamin of Tudela mentions several times the harmony between Jews and Moslems. Of Caliph Abaridas Achmed he says: "This great king . . . has great love for the Israelites, applies himself with diligence to the reading of the law of Moses, and knows Hebrew very well, reading and writing it to perfection." Describing the tomb of Esdras (who, according to tra-

dition, probably died in Persia), he states: "The Jews have erected a great synagogue before his sepulchre, and the Ishmaelites have also built a prayer-house on the other side, out of the great veneration which they have for his memory, which is the reason why the Jews are greatly liked by the Ishmaelites who come to pray there." Benjamin of Tudela also tells us that Jews and Moslems would go together to pray at the tomb of the prophet Daniel.

Documents found in Cairo and recently deciphered allow us to establish the fact that in the eleventh century the Egyptian caliphs of the famous Fatimid dynasty paid a regular contribution for the maintenance of the Talmudic academy which operated in Jerusalem! These caliphs, who surrounded themselves with Jewish ministers and counselors, were so famous for their "Judeophilism" that their enemies, following a practice which was not invented yesterday, accused them (quite erroneously) of being themselves of Jewish stock.⁶

Everything leads us to believe that an equally favorable condition, coming from a common cultural background, contributed to make Jewish thinkers and theologians receptive to Arab thought. Indeed, on this level, the close Judeo-Arab interpenetration was made evident by influences which operated in both directions. If Jews contributed to the molding of the doctrines of Islam, the infatuation of Arab thinkers with profane studies, with the "Greek sciences," at that time stirred deep echoing responses among the Jews. Whereas efforts at "Hellenization" made a thousand years before had given no lasting results and had even provoked revolts like that of the Maccabees, Jewish thought opened widely under Islam to Greek rationalism. On the extreme fringe were Jewish free thinkers who openly propagated highly heretical theories. In the early ninth century, a certain Hayawaih of Balkh did not hesitate to doubt the biblical miracles and rebelled against the very idea of the Chosen People: "How can God divide peoples into his people and foreign peoples, and assert that he destines his heritage only to the people of Israel?" That he was not the only doubter is brought out by another manuscript dating from the same period in which this "biblical criticism" is carried still further in the name of the very ethics of the Decalogue: the anonymous author of this work

6. S. D. Goitein, "Congregation versus Community . . .," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XLIV (1953-54), 304; B. Lewis, "La Légende sur l'origine juive des califes fatimides" (in Hebrew), *Mellilah*, III-IV (1950).

wonders how the Eternal could have ordered his prophet Hosea to take a prostitute for a wife, and so on. But such bold attacks were undertaken only by a few isolated thinkers, while the main current of that period led to a harmonious conciliation between the biblical revelation, interpreted as allegory, and Greek science and philosophy. This effort was begun by the famous Saadiah and other Talmudists and found its definitive expression, for several centuries, in the monumental work of Moses Maïmonides, whose memory remains equally revered in our times by Jews, Moslems, and Christians.

This opening of the mind, this new receptivity by Judaism to outside influences, has long impressed historians, who have explained it in diverse ways, all of which doubtless contain a share of truth. The essential elements can be summed up briefly: because of its very high level, Arab civilization had values to offer the Jews and formulated and presented them in a way and in a language which was accessible and familiar to the Jews. Moreover, we know that Hebrew grammar and syntax, as well as the pointing of vowels, date from this period—the creation of the anonymous “Masoretes,” who undoubtedly worked under the influence and in imitation of the learned Arab philologists. On the other hand, Arabic had become the ordinary language of the Jews, and even writings of a strictly religious nature were often produced in that language (which, according to Maïmonides and other writers, was only an inferior form of Hebrew). In the content itself, certain Islamic emphases can sometimes be seen. Thus in a letter of exhortation to his persecuted brethren, Maïmonides’ father, himself a renowned Talmudist, spoke of God and of his Apostle (Moses) in terms partially borrowed from the Koran and designated Abraham with the circumlocution “Mahdi of God.”⁷ There is no heterodoxy here, and in the same way, we must not think that the high culture and broadmindedness of Maïmonides himself made him deviate by one iota from the traditional commandments of Judaism. All we need do is read his “Iggereth Téman” (pastoral letter to the persecuted Jews of Yemen”) to see the ingenious and eloquent way in which he explains the past and present persecutions to which the Jews are subjected by “nations driven by envy and impiety.”

However, in another celebrated epistle, “Iggereth ha-Chemad” (Mes-

7. L. M. Simmons, “The Letter of Consolation of Maimun ben Joseph,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, II (1889-90), 65.

sage to the Apostates"), the same Maïmonides absolves the Jews who, threatened with death, have accepted Islam, though halfheartedly. It is meritorious, he says in substance, to forfeit one's life in such a case, but it is not in any way a question of an imperative order. In support of this thesis, he notes particularly that the persecutors are most often satisfied if they cause to be uttered the brief profession of faith, "Allah is One and Mohammed is his Prophet," and for the rest they let the Jews live according to their customs and practice the commandments of the Torah.

Later, one of his successors in the fourteenth century, Moses of Narbonne, even went so far as to claim that the Moslems' prayer is irreproachable, since they profess the oneness of God, and are circumcised.⁸ Given such laxity on the part of the masters, there is nothing surprising in the fact that many of the simple faithful applied themselves to following the law of Moses and that of Mohammed at the same time, to which practice a Spanish cabalist, Joseph ben Schalom, gave a characteristic description. Having noted that "the Christians are all idolaters," and that "the Moslems . . . also devote themselves to an idolatrous cult," this rigorist, an enemy of philosophy, continued in this vein:

Consider closely the stupidity of our co-religionists who praise and exalt the religion of the Moslems, thus transgressing the precept of the Law: "Find no grace in them." Not satisfied with that, when the Moslems profess their faith at their meeting hour in the mosques, those Jews who are poor in spirit and who do not share in religion, associate with them, reciting for their part the "Hear, Israel." Then they actively praise the nation of that wretched individual [Mohammed]. The result of this action is that they attach themselves and their children to the Moslems, vilify the holy religion of Israel, deny the law of the Lord of the Armies, and follow emptiness and vanity. I am not surprised, moreover, to see the simple folk of our nation allowing themselves to praise the Moslems; what grieves me is the fact that the very ones who claim to be versed in the religion of Israel, I mean certain notable persons in our communities, proclaim the law of the Moslems and talk of their unitary faith.⁹

Such views and practices enable us to make clearer the relationship between Judaism and Islam, and the way in which it differed from the Judeo-Christian relationships of the same period. In addition to the

8. M. Steinschneider, "Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache," *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, VI (1877).

9. Georges Vajda, "Un chapitre de l'histoire du conflit entre la kabbale et la philosophie," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 1956, p. 135.

affinities of language and culture, the strictly religious teaching of Islam facilitated the integration of Jews and Moslems to the extent that it sometimes led to the idea that, since there were no incompatibilities, one might follow the two faiths at the same time. In the beginnings of Islam, there was, in truth, a proliferation of Jewish schismatic sects (Isawites, Judganites, Muchkanites, etc.) who professed that Mohammed was a prophet sent by God to the Arabs or even to the whole human race, with the exception of the Jews alone. Arab theologians were not deceived by these subtleties, and one of them, al-Scheybani, wrote, about 800:

Today the Jews recognize in the areas of Iraq that there is no God other than Allah and that Mohammed is God's envoy, but they claim that he was sent only as a prophet to the Arabs, and not to the Jews. . . . If a Jew then recognizes that Mohammed is an envoy of God, he still cannot be regarded as a Moslem, until he declares that he has broken with his former religion and clearly avows that he has embraced Islam. . . . Therefore, where they are concerned, the name of Moslem which they use does not prove that they have the true faith; it is also necessary that they declare that they have repudiated their old religion. Likewise, if a Jew says: "I have left Judaism," and if he does not add: "I have entered Islam," he must not be considered to be a Moslem, for after having left Judaism, it is still possible that he may have entered Christianity. If he states on the contrary that he has entered Islam, only then does no more ambiguity exist.¹⁰

The preceding shows how the tradition of the *inouis*, of Judaism practiced in secret in case of necessity, under the mask of Islam, was truly a constant element among the Jews whose history unfolded in the shadow of the Crescent—to the point of producing later, in territory which had become Christian, the extraordinary phenomenon of *marranism*, a mode of adaptation entirely unknown to the purely European Jewish communities in northern and eastern Europe.

In connection with Jewish sectarian movements, we must mention particularly the Karaites, who rejected the Talmud totally. Judging its traditional interpretation of the Old Testament to be no longer valid in the Islamic era, they maintained that Holy Scripture should henceforth be interpreted in a different way, through a new, attentive reading (whence the name of the sect: "Ka Ro," "to read"). Here also, the influence of Moslem theology and of its immense effort to interpret the Koran played a definite role; on the other hand, it is also possible

10. I. Goldziher, "Usages juifs d'après la littérature des Musulmans," *Revue des études juives*, XXVIII (1894), 91.

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to compare the position of the Karaites with that of the Protestant reformationists. Karaite was so successful that it led to a veritable schism in the center of Judaism, the only one in its history. For centuries it flourished in Persia, Palestine, and Egypt. Later it was propagated in Spain and in Poland and has had zealous followers down to our day.

All this fermentation was not unrelated to the charges which took place at this time within the large mass of the Jews, a matter of capital importance in their history. First, on the eve of the Arab conquest, the Jews withdrew, especially into agriculture, a situation which is reflected in the numerous discussions of agrarian law in the Talmud. Three or four centuries later, we find that they have become a people of tradesmen and craftsmen, a city people par excellence. This is a case of a true socioeconomic mutation, and history offers other examples of it—the Armenians, for instance who were still farmers and craftsmen at the end of the Middle Age, were the principal tradesmen of the Ottoman Empire from the Renaissance on. In the final analysis, it is difficult to clarify the reasons for such phenomena. In the case of the Jews, we must taken into account the economic upheavals caused by the Arab conquest, the prosperity of the towns and the poverty of the rural areas, the “bourgeois revolution” of Islam (to use Professor Goitein’s terms). In that period commerce experienced an impressive rise. From Scandinavia all the way to China, daring Arab wayfarers were sailing the seas, navigating the rivers, and setting up trading posts. In Islam, trade was considered to be one of the most honorable professions, and even pleasing to God; had not the Prophet himself, like many of his companions, practiced it? The turntable of these international activities was Baghdad, at the center of a region where there was a dense Jewish population. And no provision of law nor any social barrier prevented the Jews from going into trade.

As a result, one could say that at the end of this revolution the structure of Judaism was not unlike the structure it had, for example, in the tolerant Europe of the nineteenth century. The Jewish communities which swarmed throughout the Moslem empire were composed, on the one hand, of craftsmen and small shopkeepers and, on the other, of bankers and businessmen with international connections. Sometimes two or more communities, the local Jews and those who had come

from other provinces, lived in the same city. As the Onomastic teaches, this period was marked by the migrations of Jews from east to west, and many of them in Egypt or in North Africa bore the names of Persian or Mesopotamian cities. These communities were governed in oligarchic fashion. Very often the rich members, the financiers, carried out—and passed down from father to son—the functions of “nag-gid,” or king of the Jews, who was responsible for relations with the authorities, and the functions of the “pakid-ha-scharim,” a sort of consul charged with the protection of the commercial interests of local and foreign Jews, both functions sometimes being exercised by the same person.

Despite the scarcity of documents, it is sometimes possible to reconstitute the profile of certain persons. We learn for instance, from Arab sources about the bankers Joseph-ben-Phineas and Aaron-ben-Amram, who flourished in Baghdad under Caliph al-Muqtadir (908-32):¹¹

Ben-Phineas and ben-Amram directed a banking firm and profited from their vast influence with rich Jews and with non-Jews who deposited their capital with them. In addition, the vizier deposited with them the amount of the fines exacted from prevaricating functionaries who had enriched themselves too quickly. In this way, the bankers could advance to the treasury, at the beginning of each month, the 30,000 gold dinars required for the payment of the troops (amounting to several hundred million francs). They were not always reimbursed with exactitude, but their situation allowed them to engage in many other profitable operations and speculations. They maintained regular cross-desert caravan service between large cities, organized maritime expeditions to India and China, and took black slaves on the east coast of Africa. They knew all about the art of financial arbitration, based on the fundamental fact that the Abasside Caliphate was bimetallic, the former Byzantine provinces had held to the gold standard (gold dinars), and the Persian provinces had retained the silver standard (silver dirhams). The ratio between the two monies, varying over the years between 1:14 and 1:20, opened up great possibilities for real

11. Based on W. J. Fischel, *Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Mediaeval Islam* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1937), and on L. Massignon, “L’Influence de l’Islam au Moyen Age sur la fondation et l’essor des banques juives,” *Bulletin des études orientales*, I (1931).

stock market speculation. The financial technique of this era already included not only the use of letters of credit (*suftaja*) but also of bills of exchange payable to order (*sakk*, from which "check" is etymologically derived). The Arab chronicler speaks of this as follows:

The Vizier Ibn al-Furāt then took his ink-pot and wrote an order to his banker (*jahbadh*) Aaron b. Amram, telling him to pay from his account and without further notice 2,000 dinārs to 'Ali b. 'Īsā, as a subvention towards the payment of a fine imposed upon him. Muhassin b. al-Furāt also ordered his banker to pay this 'Ali b. 'Īsā 1,000 dinārs from his account that was in Aaron b. Amram's bank.¹²

Kings of finance in Baghdad and bankers to the caliphs for a quarter of a century, ben-Phineas and ben-Amram may have been the first such persons, but they were not the only ones. Another chronicle tells us that most of the merchants of Tustar in Persia were Jews. At Ispahan, called "the second Baghdad" because of its flourishing trade, the *yahuddiah* quarter was the center of business dealings. The governor of the province of Ahwaz also resorted to the services of several Jewish bankers (the source mentions Yakub, Israel ben Salih, Sahl ben-Nazir). Siraf, the main port of the caliphate in the tenth century, apparently even had a Jewish governor named Ruzbah (the Persian equivalent of Yom-tov).

Further to the west, we note the meteoric career of the Banu Sahl brothers, Abu Sa'd and Abu Nasr, favorites of the Fatimid caliphs az-Zahir and al-Mustansir,¹³ whose prosperity has contributed to many an Arab legend. The palace that Abu Sa'd built in Cairo was said to have 300 silver vases on the veranda, "each with a tree planted in it." The brothers are said to have given az-Zahir's widow a silver ship. This widow was, in fact, a former black slave whom the brothers had sold to az-Zahir and who had become his favorite wife; after his death, she acted as regent in the name of his son al-Mustansir and made Abu-Sa'd her confidential adviser and vizier. This allowed the brothers to increase their fortune greatly, but it also led to their destruction. The regent asked Abu Sa'd to recruit a personal guard for her, composed of black soldiers, and soon the Negro and the Turk parties were opposing

12. W. Fischel, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 68 ff., "The Banu Sahl of Tustar."

each other at the court. The latter finally won, and the Banu Sahl brothers were assassinated in 1047.

However, from all that has preceded, we must not conclude that finance and trade had at any time become a Jewish monopoly. Both Christians and Moslems continued to excel in them, but because of the scarcity and lack of precision of the sources, it is impossible to furnish any indication of the relative shares of the groups. Moreover, the Arab sources mention only the leaders, telling us practically nothing of the activities of small or average merchants. To get some idea of this, we must turn to a Jewish source, extraordinarily rich in a case of this kind (but unfortunately, it is the only case)—the *Geniza* ("secret room") of the synagogue of old Cairo.

In keeping with the old Jewish usage, no document bearing the sacred name of God—and practically, that meant no document of any kind at all—was to be destroyed. However insignificant the contents, the document was carefully preserved in a *Geniza*, which most synagogues had. But the vicissitudes of fate, wars, and persecutions, combined with the destructive work of time, have caused the disappearance of these precious archives, which once went back ten centuries—with the exception of those of Cairo, preserved by the dry climate of the Nile Valley. For two or three generations, scholars have been devoting themselves to deciphering this inexhaustible mine of information on the intellectual, social, and economic life of the Jews and non-Jews of that time.

Thus we learn that Jewish merchants, big and small, made money and goods circulate among all the cities of the immense Islamic empire and that their activity was carried on even outside it. They were found in great numbers in all the ports of East Africa, India, and Ceylon, having come not only from the big cities of North Africa—Tangiers, Kairwan, Tripoli, Alexandria—but also from humble villages whose names are forgotten. What did they trade? One of the foremost specialists on the Cairo *Geniza*, S. D. Goitein, says that they imported from India

spices, aromatics, dyeing and varnishing plants and medicinal herbs; iron and steel . . . brass vessels. This group may be a special case. I have the impression that North African Jews, especially one, of whom we have many documents, developed this industry in an Indian town with the help of Yemenite Jewish

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craftsmen . . . because the raw materials . . . were shipped to India from the West.

They also imported from India "silk and other textiles and clothes; pearls, beads, cowryshells and ambergris; Chinese porcelain . . . tropical fruits."

They exported to India textiles, household goods (frying pans, tables, carpets, mats), medicaments, soap, paper, books, cheese, sugar, and olive oil. India and Africa exported raw materials and metals in particular, while the Near East furnished manufactures and consumer goods, some for the use of Westerners living in India and in Africa. "The situation has some similarity to the relations of Europe with her spheres of colonial expansion in modern times."¹⁴

Such being the case, everything leads one to believe that the old Jewish colonies of Mesopotamia had become centers of an international trade which was just as successful as trade was in the colonies of North Africa. Unfortunately for our knowledge of these colonies, there is no source for them comparable to the Cairo *Geniza*, which gives us many other details about the life and customs of the Jews of that era. We learn, for example, that contrary to the accepted opinion, monogamy was their rule and was expressly stipulated in marriage contracts. It is typical of the high status of the Jewish woman of this period that many of these contracts contain a clause according to which the husband cannot go on a business trip without the wife's consent. Of course, these trips were in those days daring and lengthy enterprises. Perhaps this clause can be compared with another bit of evidence, according to which the young Jewesses of Yemen, renowned for their beauty, were a supplementary attraction for many a traveler. . . . In any case, we may conclude that there was, among the Oriental Jews, a feeling of romantic love completely unknown at that period in the austere ghettos of Europe. Moreover, other documents show that the Eastern Jews had a tendency to scorn their unfortunate European brethren and to consider them of inferior origin.

It would be erroneous to conclude from the preceding material that the Jews always flourished in Islam. In the eastern part of the territory of Islam there were sporadic persecutions which were generally directed

14. S. D. Goitein, "The Cairo Geniza as a Source for the History of Muslim Civilization," *Studia Islamica*, III (1955), 81-83.

against the Jewish and Christian *dhimmis* at the same time. The most famous one, and perhaps the most cruel, was that undertaken by Caliph Hakim; in 1012, he ordered all the churches and synagogues in Egypt and Persia destroyed and forbade the practice of religion other than that of Islam. It is significant that Moslem historians have been unable to explain this decision other than by attributing it to the madness which is reported to have come suddenly on the caliph. In the western part (Barbary), from which Christianity had disappeared in the twelfth century although Judaism prospered (a disparity which reminds us of the extent to which Judaism was better fitted for living under a foreign domination), there were, first under the Almoravid dynasty, then under the Almohads, ferocious persecutions which extended to Moslem Spain.

It has been observed that these persecutions were almost all of Berber origin, the expression of the excessive zeal of new converts rather than of consistent dynastic policy. The explanation is worth what it is worth—interpretations of this kind are perhaps more valid in the case of princes belonging to the Shiite sect, always intolerant, and by doctrine. Indeed, we observe that many of the known persecutions were the work of Shiites—for example, those in Yemen (one of them, about 1172, stirred Maïmonides to write the epistle mentioned earlier) and those which were endemic in Persia in the more recent past. Certainly what we know is much scantier than what we do not know. In this connection, the following laconic sentence from the chronicler Ibn-Verga, a Spanish Jew is typical: "In the big city of Fez, a great persecution took place; but since I have never found out anything precise about it, I have not described it more fully."

It seems clear that the Jews were included in the anti-Christian persecutions in Egypt under the Mameluke domination, extending from the mid-thirteenth century to the mid-fifteenth. Yet in any case, however numerous and intense these tribulations may have been, the list of them, full of lacunae and established according to the hazard of the chronicles, does not constitute any probing clue to the attitude of Moslems toward Jewish infidels. From this point of view, the trades and ways of life of the Jews as we have just outlined them, the wide range of their professions, contrasting with the situation of a caste relegated to one humiliating trade, furnish a better indication. The study of the

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tradition of Islam, of its literature and its legends, its tales and its fables, is quite as instructive on this point.

When everything is taken into consideration, we do not find any great difference between the image of the Jew and the image of the Christian in Moslem literary tradition. Both are *dhimmis*, tributaries, and the scorn which the true believers have for them is not malevolent. According to the legist Mawerdi, tribute "is demanded with scorn because it is a question of a payment owed by the *dhimmis* for their infidelity, but it is also demanded with gentleness, since it is a question of payment stemming from the quarter which we have given them."¹⁵

Among many other literary indications, this little story reflects clearly the impartiality of the Moslems concerning the different categories of tributaries:

A Christian and a doctor of the Koran were on board a ship. From a wineskin he had with him the Christian poured some wine into a bowl, drank it, then poured again and offered it to the doctor, who took it from his hands without thinking.

"May my life serve as ransom for yours," said the Christian, "but take care, that is wine!"

"And how do you know it's wine?"

"My servant bought it from a Jew who swore it was wine."

Thereupon the doctor drained the bowl and said to the Christian, "Fool that you are! We traditionalists consider as uncertain the statements of . . . (the doctor cited the names of several companions of the Prophet) and should we give any credence to the statement of a Christian who reports his fact on the authority of a Jew! By God! I only drained the bowl to show the little belief that one should place in such statements."¹⁶

Let us recall in conclusion that, faithful to the Koran's teachings on charity, its doctors prescribed that charity should be extended to the infidels. The following fable cites Omar the Implacable as a witness:

Caliph Omar was passing in the street when he noticed a beggar, very old, and blind. He touched him on the forearm and said, "Who art thou?"

"I am an adept of the revealed religion."

"And of which one?"

"I am a Jew."

"And who is it who forces thee to do what I see?"

15. Mawerdi, *Les statuts gouvernementaux*, ed. Fagnan (Algiers, 1915), p. 208.

16. Ahmad al-Absihi, "De la prohibition du vin," *Al-Monstratif* ("Recueil de morceaux choisis çà et là . . ."), ed. G. Rat (Paris, 1899).

"I am begging for the amount of my tribute, and for enough to meet my needs and supply my food."

Then Omar, taking him by the hand, took him to his home, where he gave him alms; after which, he sent this message to the keeper of the public Treasury: "Behold this man and those like him! We are not just toward them; after profiting from their youth, we humiliate them in the time of their decrepitude. Have him share in the alms tithes of the Moslems, for he is one of those whom Allah calls indigent, saying: *the alms tithes are only for the poor and the indigent* . . . the Moslems are the poor, but this man is an adept of the revealed religion." And the caliph exonerated the old man and his fellows from the tribute.¹⁷

We know that Western Christian tradition contains many an unforgettable lesson in exemplary piety—but it would be vain to seek there a figure of a Jew, poor and worthy of pity.

17. Abu Yusuf Ya'kub, *Le Livre de l'impôt foncier*, ed. Fagnan (Paris, 1921), p. 194.

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

Marie-Madeleine Davy

THE SYMBOLIC MENTALITY OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

The Middle Ages, and in particular the twelfth century, with its monks who were philosophers, theologians, and mystics, hung upon biblical thought and through it did its thinking, its loving, and its acting. The Old and the New Testaments were studied and meditated upon together, though the Old Testament was more often commented upon than was the New. Both offered two successive stages, represented by the law and by grace. For the men of the twelfth century Holy Scripture was the basis of their symbolic mentality. Through Scripture they could distinguish a duality of meanings which can be stated precisely under the terms "letter" and "spirit." This double terminology was comprehended on two different levels and depended on the degree of the individual's evolution. Saint Bernard understood it very well when he alluded to the ordinary mode of seeing and to the spiritual mode. The heart's vision sees in the mind (Sermon XLV, 5, on the Song of

Translated by Wells F. Chamberlin.

Songs).¹ Just as that hearing which is not of the body but which belongs to the heart understands what the ears could not hear, there are, according to Saint Bernard, three kinds of language to which three modes of understanding correspond: the mode of the hireling, that of the son, and that of the wife (Sermon VII, 2, on the Song of Songs).² The first stays on the threshold to knowledge, the second crosses it, but only the wife penetrates into true knowledge which designates a knowledge acquired more by intuition than by learning and which Saint Jerome called "*scientia secretorum*." This stimulates another way of thinking and of loving and coincides with a new dimension of being. In regard to the comprehension of symbolic content, three steps or successive stages are involved here.

Commenting on a text of the Song of Songs (1:7), "Tell me . . . where Thou reposest at noon," Saint Bernard observes that these images and similitudes appear to designate only bodies and corporeal realities—but this is not at all the case and to follow such a manner of interpretation would be erroneous (Sermon XXXIII, 1, on the Song of Songs).³ These words open the way to a spiritual understanding. And, to reach it, the author recommends that "we enter into ourselves."

This way of understanding Holy Scripture constitutes the real "knowledge of salvation." The expression comes from Guillaume Firmat and has nothing to do with a hereafter following death but rather with existence itself—a state of plenitude to which it is fitting to accede. Along this line—we might say on this "royal road," to use terminology frequent at the time—the men of the twelfth century had precursors who became their initiators. The Greek and Latin Church Fathers had interpreted the symbols of the Bible, and these symbols guided later men in their way of proceeding.

This utilization of symbols, whether it appears in language, in writ-

1. *Patrologie latine* 183. 1001. For this and other references to the commentary on the Song of Songs see *Cantica Canticorum: Eighty-six Sermons on the Song of Solomon*, trans. S. J. Eales (London: Stock, 1895); and *Saint Bernard on the Song of Songs*, translated by a Religious of C.S.M.V. (London: Mowbray, 1952).

2. *Patrologie latine* 183. 807. This same theme was set forth at length by Cassian, *Collatio* XI, vii, in *Patrologie latine* 39. 853. For an English translation of Cassian see *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2d ser., XI (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1894), 417-18.

3. *Patrologie latine* 183. 945.

ing, or in reflection, involves two different attitudes; we shall come back to these later. The first appears as entirely external; it consists of a repetition of more or less systematic symbols and is merely a stylistic process. The second is animated—the result of the experience of life, it gives evidence of a profundity and by that fact indicates a change of level, the passing from exteriority to interiority.

For the authors of the twelfth century, all knowledge, whether of God or of the universe, is preceded by the knowledge of one's self. This is at the beginning and at the end of every search.

These men knew themselves to be the heirs of a past, a past which they did not scorn. On the contrary, they wanted to adopt it. They maintained the same respect in regard to antiquity as did the men of the Renaissance. Thus they rediscovered the neo-Platonistic inspiration which came to them through Saint Augustine and Dionysius, the one closely bound up in time and history, the other attached to mystery and the transcendent. Moreover, the scholars of the twelfth century see themselves as the debtors of Greco-Roman thought;⁴ one is astonished to see the extraordinarily extensive culture of Romanic men. Pierre le Mangeur's *History*, for example, is, as Alphandéry puts it, a "memento of the history of religions."⁵ Correspondences between Christian symbols and symbols belonging to universal man have often been pointed out as a means, not of stimulating faith, but of making it more accessible.

For our authors, every step in the symbolic order begins with the knowledge of self. If a man does not know himself, it is strictly impossible for him to perceive the meaning of the symbols and to adhere to their reality. This self-knowledge which precedes all knowledge is, according to Saint Bernard and Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, the very objective of the monastic life—it is part of the apprenticeship in charity to which the monk devotes himself. The beginner frees himself from all knowledge of the outside in order to give himself up freely and solely to this knowledge of the inside, on which is based his ascetic and mystic

4. Cf. E. Faral, *Recherches sur les sources latines des contes et romans courtois du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1913).

5. Alphandéry, "L'Ephémérisme et le début de l'histoire des religions au Moyen Age," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, CIX (1934), 23.

life. And here are the terms in which Saint Bernard invites his disciples to this knowledge:

Here [in the monastery] you have to be concerned neither with the care of raising your children, nor of pleasing your wives, nor with bargaining, with business, nor even with food and clothing. The evil of the day and the solicitude of life are ordinarily unknown to you. A God has hidden you in the most secret place of his tabernacle: Keep yourself in a holy repose and consider your God (Ps. 45:11). But to reach this you must act so as to know who you are, according to this word of the prophet: "Let men know clearly that they are men" (Ps. 9:21). It is to this double consideration that your vocation must be devoted, according to this word of a saint: "My Lord, make me to know you and to know myself."⁶

Here, Bernard recommends self-knowledge as he considers again a text of Saint Augustine; he will also require it when he cites the Delphic oracle and the Bible as his authorities—thus Greek tradition and the Bible are joined. More than that, the famous adage comes from heaven as the word of God: "It is from heaven that this counsel is given us: know thyself, O man. Indeed, have you not noticed that this is the language which the husband, in the Song of Songs [1:7], addresses to the wife when he says to her: 'If thou knowest not thyself, O fair one among women, go forth and depart'?"⁷ Thus there is a progressive movement of knowledge; again we find in the twelfth-century commentators a reflection of Paul's teaching: *sed quod animale, deinde quod spiritale* (I Cor. 15:46, "But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual").

Such a mentality implies a recognition of the sacred. At that time, all was made sacred, not only theology, mysticism, and art, but sociology and even politics. Nothing escapes the sacred, which extends to man as well as to fauna, flora, and stone. There is no nature and supranature; at least the terms could not be used as opposites of each other and to imply some hostility between them. The universe is harmony, an architectural potency in which each element occupies a place of choice; ordered diversity collaborates in the beauty of the whole. A master of the school of Chartres will write that the world is an "ordered whole of

6. Serm. II, 1, *De diversis*, in *Patrologie latine* 183, 542.

7. *Sermon de diversis* XL, 2, in *Patrologie latine* 183, 648.

creatures."⁸ Let man penetrate into the order of causes, and all appears to him bound up in the visible and the invisible.⁹

Among the biblical texts other than that of the Genesis, which was so frequently cited, the Song of Songs appears to be laden with symbols. That is why it was, more than any other text, the subject of twelfth century commentaries. According to Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, the Song is presented as a drama in which all the actors use the language of the flesh. And Guillaume does not convert the carnal into the spiritual—it is up to the individual to grasp the sense of the Song according to his own ability. Only the "carnal" will persist in a meaning which is solely carnal; those who "progress" and the "perfect" will know how to discover the mystery which lies beyond the erotic expressions. To those who might be surprised by Guillaume's style, which is moreover characteristic of medieval exegesis, we might recall the phrase of the Talmud: "God speaks to men in the language of men."

The human mind is incapable of knowing the divine, for the divine, according to Saint Bernard, will blind the soul. Indeed, he will say, man can look at the sun each day, but he never sees it as it is, he sees it "really only as it lights up other things, such as the air, a mountain, or a wall." And man could not even see God in this way if the light of the body—given by his eye—did not have a certain affinity with the sun. The pure spirit could not be offered to the contemplation of a carnal spirit. That is why the fulgurating God, in order not to blind carnal man, must envelop himself in shadow. The shadow of God is formed by Christ as flesh. Consequently it is necessary to go beyond this consideration in order to contemplate Christ in the brilliance of his glory, that is, as the Verb of God. If man spiritualizes himself, the wall of shadow crumbles away, and if it is not entirely destroyed, there are apertures which allow the light to filter through. Man thus sees by flashes without being blinded, and these flashes of light signify a presence and infuse man with the desire to become a true son of light. He turns away from everything which may be a trap to slacken his progress. His journey becomes ever more rapid, the shadows holding back the captive light less and less. Truth, Saint Bernard says in the same ser-

8. Guillaume de Conches, *Glossa in Timaeum*. Cf. J.-M. Parent, *La Doctrine de la création dans l'école de Chartres* (Paris, 1938), p. 146: "mundus ordinata collectio creaturarum."

9. Cf. the writer's *Essai sur la symbolique romane* (Paris, 1955), pp. 15-16.

mon, has no face, but it confers a face; it does not blind the bodily eyes, it inundates the heart with joy.

The field of investigation to which this search for the meaning of symbols applies is immense—it includes all the arts (trivium-quadrivium). History itself was unable to escape from it. The symbolic interpretation was present in the poetic arts and in the art of architecture, in bestiaries and lapidaries; Arthurian romances, the sculpture of Saint Savin, the liturgy, and the treatises on colors and numbers reveal it. This behavior of writers, artists, poets, and sculptors bears witness to a deep unity of research and teaching.

Of course, we may reproach our authors for being excessively inspired by their forerunners and for interpreting and even copying men like Isidore of Seville, Boethius, Raban Maur, or even Bede. But the tradition which was offered them did not need to be varied, since it was located outside of time. Only the understanding which one might have of it was modified.

Whether it is received or transmitted, this teaching which inspires the men of the Middle Age has its roots deep in those ancient traditions in which Semitic and Greek thought commune. Whether for example it is the numbers proposed by Isidore in his *Liber numerorum* and which Hugues de Saint-Victor and Eudes de Morimond take up again on their own account, or the importance of the names set forth by Honorius of Autun, there is still the interpretation of a mysterious science for those who consider it on a level which is not that of the transformation of being, or, more precisely, of the evolution of being. The denominations concerning the symbol may change, but the content remains identical. It is in this sense that Mircea Eliade could write: "Images constitute openings to a transhistorical world."¹⁰ The symbol has that undifferentiated character of Semitic verbal time which leaves one hanging on the articulations of development. The future constantly molds the present.¹¹ Thus the symbol goes beyond history at the same time that it situates itself in history—in the midst of universality it liberates from the real by causing light to be produced. That is why it has a meaning devoid of limitation—it has been, it is, it will be. Its function is creative; it causes one to be by tearing him away from the servi-

10. *Images et symboles* (Paris, 1952), p. 229.

11. Cf. A. Chouraqui, *Les Psaumes* (Paris, 1956), p. 2.

ture of ignorance. From this is derived the importance of the Romanesque church, of its architecture and of its iconography. In art the symbol appears as an initiating instrument which is addressed to all men. The meditation of vision is a form of liberation, teaching through the eyes that which others reach through hearing.

The perception of symbols is always comparable to a journey ending in a knowledge which coincides with love. In the *Quest of the Grail* it is clear that for Galahad to know is to love and to love is to know.¹² All knowledge born by virtue of the presence of a symbol develops into a love of universal order. This applies to all symbols, even to those which might appear to escape such a law.

If, for example, we take the word *Adam*, we see Honorius of Autun, using the Greek letters of this name, coming out with the figure forty-six.¹³ And four plus six equals ten, which is the figure of the perfect man and which, cabala teaches us, is also the number of God. Of course, an interpretation made in a literal sense has no interest at all. It becomes animated only to the extent that it includes a dynamic sense and thus assumes a progressive movement—that of man who creates himself, has no confidence in himself, and responds to his first finished creation by perfecting himself. If we are concerned with the word *bread*, we see Pierre de Celle collecting and interpreting the Biblical texts in which bread is mentioned (*De panibus*, P.L. 202. 927 ff.). The literal interpretation of the daily bread to which the texts of Matthew (6:11) and Luke (11:3) allude may mean the food which nourishes the body. When the real symbol is perceived, bread takes on a completely different meaning—it designates the spiritual bread which allows man access to another level.

Many other examples could be considered, such as that of the beatitude "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3), often commented upon by medieval theologians. They understood that it was not a matter of poverty on the material level but of begging for the food of the spirit, of being famished for it. He who thinks he possesses, expects nothing; one should have properly a feeling of emptiness in order to desire ardently, to lie in wait for the signs and to be able to receive.¹⁴

12. See M. Lot-Borodine, "Les grands secrets du Saint-Graal dans la quête du pseudo-map," in "Lumière du Graal," *Les Cahiers du sud* (Paris, 1951), p. 157.

13. *Sacramentarium*, *Patrologie latine* 172. 741.

14. Cf. Saint Bernard, *De conversione ad clericos*, VII, 12, *Patrologie latine* 182. 841.

The dialecticians and the rational thinkers rose up against this symbolic turn of mind. They rejected this mode of thought which they judged with severity and which it is important not to confuse with the systematic allegorism of a man like Rupert of Deutz or with the symbolic cosmology of Hildegarde of Bingen, or even with the eschatological imagery of Joachim of Flora.

When the symbolic process is utilized in exegesis, it runs the risk of appearing tiresome. Proceeding by clichés, it thus loses all spontaneity and is organized into a system. The different senses—literal, spiritual, allegorical, historical—sometimes appear to be studied simultaneously and often without any important result.¹⁵ In fact the use of the symbol is valid only on condition that it correspond to its true function, that of revealing a presence, a veiled presence which must be discovered. That is why, in the Middle Age, man is thought of as a traveler, a pilgrim, an itinerant who goes from discovery to discovery. He is called upon to pass through various stages—which explains the very frequent theme of Jacob's ladder, the ladder to heaven (*scala caeli*, according to Honorius of Autun [P.L. 172. 1239]), the theme of the tree (Hugues de Saint-Victor, *De fructibus carnis et spiritus* [P.L. 176. 997]). Man accomplishes a cosmic voyage to which Alain de Lille alludes in his *Anticlaudianus* (I. v and vi).

However, one must not confuse symbol with allegory. In his work on the study of the allegories of Holy Scripture, Isidore of Seville shows that they are what he calls "prefigurations of mystery."¹⁶ The use of allegory was developed both in exegesis and in architecture and the allegorical study of numbers became highly successful. But although allegory enjoyed an immense prestige, the fact remains that it was still figurative and did not offer teaching material. Because of its didactic value, symbolism will fill quite another role. In *Symbols of Transformation* Jung writes: "The symbol is neither an allegory nor a *semeion* [sign]; it is the image of a content which in large part transcends consciousness. We must discover that such contents are real, that is, that they are *agentia* with which it is not only possible, but necessary, to come to terms."¹⁷

15. On this question see M. D. Chenu, *La Théologie au XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1957), pp. 191 ff.

16. *Quaestiones in vetus Testamentum, praefatio, Patrologie latine* 83. 207B.

17. Translated from the French of *Métamorphoses de l'âme et ses symboles* (Geneva, 1953), p. 155.

The use of symbols does not mean, for that matter, that those who repeated such and such a symbolic interpretation may not have been caught in a dead letter. Moreover, when we read medieval authors it is easy to see what is sterile, or on the other hand, what is alive. A number of texts of symbolic presentation exist which seem to have no reality at all. In interpreting them, we think of the text of Jeremiah 2:13: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

This symbolic mentality, so highly prized by the monks, is practiced particularly upon what Dom Jean Leclercq very aptly called the "literature of silence," which belongs much more to written than to oral style. "In the monastery," he says, "one writes because one does not speak, one writes in order not to speak."¹⁸ But beyond the writing to which the silent monk may dedicate himself, there exists a true silence stripped of all language, whether writing or speech is involved. In this sense Saint Bernard alludes to the necessity for some men to accede to the summit of the heart (Sermon XXXII, 8, on the Song of Songs). For him who is eager for truth a moment comes when his God speaks to him "mouth to mouth" as to Moses. His knowledge goes beyond "enigmas and figures" (XXXII, 9). Led step by step to the sacred mountain, he is introduced into the tabernacle, that is, he is placed in the presence of the truth, he sees it uncovered.

That is why the twelfth-century scholar reads without curiosity but with the purpose of instructing his soul. He is called upon to read in his heart, a disciple of Saint Bernard tells us. Such reading is preferable to the reading of manuscripts: *in corde magis quam in omni codice*.¹⁹

To this symbolic mentality of the monks there corresponded among the people a sensitivity in search of the marvelous, a fondness for miracles, and a discernment in natural phenomena of signs which heralded good or bad events. One must add, of course, that when we talk of the people, it is clear that we have no real grasp of them. We know them only through historical and poetic documentation, which is surprisingly abundant. This is true even in the case of the *Historiae* of Raoul Glaber, the *Historia* of Guibert of Nogent, the work of Foucher of Chartres

18. *L'Amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu* (Paris, 1957), p. 147.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 241.

(*Gesta Francorum Hierusalem peregrinantium*), or if we turn to more particular chronicles, epic poetry or the didactic treatises.²⁰

Faith in the power of relics is total—they give healing and protection from danger. The discovery of the “holy lance” restores confidence and convinces the crusaders when they are discouraged on the plain of Antioch. Animals play a role—white stags, nay even the goose, guides pilgrims and those who have lost their way. Not only animals, but all of nature protects the just and makes them triumphant over their enemies. Clouds gather around soldiers to keep them from being seen, and at Antioch the noise of the assailants is not heard because the wind covers it.²¹

Man is linked to heaven and earth, and he belongs to nature. That is why it appears natural that a plant, an animal, or a star should warn, counsel, or be provided with a precise meaning. According to Foucher of Chartres, God uses the elements of creation not only to converse with man but to instruct him, protect him, or make him vigilant. Fires, wars, epidemics, and famines are announced by signs. These may include a comet, an unusual color of the sky or of the night, hail storms, falling stones, and of course, eclipses. Here we find again the Augustinian representation of a universe in which God easily manifests himself as much in the ripening of the vines and of the fields of grain as in the miracle, worked in a poor monastery, which permitted starving monks to find bread and wine on their empty table.

Signs have either a collective or an individual import; they precede disasters and calamities and the good deeds or the death of an important personage. In certain cases, the chronicler reports faithfully the feelings experienced by an individual or a group; in others he corrects what he considers to be childish. Thus Raoul Glaber alludes to a whale which cast fear into the minds of those who saw it on the coast of Caux. Shortly thereafter, a war broke out. But Raoul Glaber finds the reason for the fighting in the discords which had been dividing the common people and which, spreading to the lords, put them at each other's throats.²²

20. *Fierabras*, ed. A. Kroeber and G. Servois (Paris, 1860), p. 107.

21. Albert d'Aix, *Liber christianae expeditionis*, I, 1, Hist. occid., IV, 295.

22. Raoul Glaber, *Historiae*, ed. Prou (Paris, 1886), I, v, c. 3 ff. See the article by L. Musset, “Raoul Glaber et la baleine,” *Revue du Moyen Age latin*, IV (1948), No. 2, 167 ff.

Imagination is so rich that animals and plants of oriental origin, unknown in the West, are described in minute detail. Extraordinary men and animals are provided with strange powers.²³ The animals which a man might encounter near his house, in his woods or fields, participate in his joy and in his misfortune. Everything is an omen. When a wolf sounds a bell (!), when a church candle breaks three times, an important event occurs. Monsters and demons appear more frequently than saints or angels. The Devil's tricks are without number—they strike the imagination, and diabolical visions haunt men's minds and are incised in stone.

The birth of men whose importance will be unusually great is often preceded by dreams of premonition by the mother or by those in the newborn's immediate household. And the infant itself has a behavior which sets it apart from other children of the same age.

This sense of the marvelous is accompanied by a belief in immanent justice. God punishes and rewards without delay. The guilty are surprised by misfortune unless they can mend their ways, and in that case they are forewarned of a temporary punishment. The just must be rewarded and must overcome their enemies. This explains the anguish felt at the failure of a war which is considered to be holy, and the importance given to trials by ordeal. Every error calls for punishment. If pilgrims or crusaders are massacred, people immediately wonder what was the extent of their culpability.²⁴ General catastrophes are a sign of the guilty condition of humanity.²⁵

Here again, the elements fire and water proved God's judgment in respect to heretical books, relics, and men. Guibert of Nogent relates how two brothers suspected of heresy were tried by Lisiard, the Bishop of Soissons. One of them, Clement, floated when cast into a vat. He owed his life to this judgment by water, and the authorities were satisfied by his imprisonment.

Of course we should not think that these men, so attentive to the profound meaning of symbols, were necessarily gentle, just, and filled with

23. See Paul Rousset, "Le Sens du merveilleux à l'époque féodale," *Moyen Age*, 1956, Nos. 1-2, pp. 24-37.

24. See Albert d'Aix, *Liber christianae expeditionis*, in *Recueil des Croisades*, IV, 378 ff.

25. See the excellent article by Paul Rousset, "Justice immanente à l'époque féodale," *Moyen Age*, 1948, Nos. 3-4, pp. 225-48.

compassion. Among the fervent and tender commentators of the Song of Songs were many who could calumniate those whom they judged, rightly or wrongly, to be perturbing spirits. Heretics were thought to be destroyers of Christianity, and all those who troubled the established order were to be punished. During the Cambrai insurrection at the end of the eleventh century, Guibert, who was against the bishop of the town, had his tongue cut out and his eyes extinguished. Before being killed, he was dragged through the streets with his hands tied behind his back. To soothe their consciences, the bishop and his defenders appealed to a text of Saint Augustine: "To kill a man is not always criminal, but it is criminal to kill out of wickedness and not under the laws." Clever tortures were applied with cynicism. One may say that they are explained by the mentality of the period. Certainly such an affirmation is exact. But it should not be forgotten that among the acts of violence which we note with horror today, certain ones have their roots in an era which thought itself Christian.

This century whose symbolic mentality we have sought to state in precise terms is consequently not attentive to the inner life alone. Although the monasteries are the centers of the intellectual and religious life and although people have correctly spoken of "the twelfth-century renaissance," it is quite clear that this period experienced a prodigious upward surge on other levels. The dominant factor is precisely the creations in the technical field which change city life and modify social and economic conditions—windmills, water wheels, war industries, rudders, and compasses were manufactured, and as their use spread, they changed rural life and navigation. In 1188 eighteen stone arches carried the bridge of Avignon over the Rhone and mechanical clocks were marking the passage of time. And so, naïve and daring, credulous and intransigent, loving, tender—but brutal at the same time—this century appears wondrously rich.

In the heart of this passionate and ardent period, infatuated with discovery, the attention given to symbols and the taste for the marvelous may seem obtrusive. However, this symbolic mentality of the monks, this sense of the marvelous in the people, do not appear on the same level. The search for the content of symbols gives access to a higher level, but the taste for the extraordinary, the stuff of popular credulity, does not develop awareness. Yet there are elements common to both. These are asserted in respect to the universe—macrocosm and micro-

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cosm are united. God is not separated from man; He is always present, ready to intervene, to bless or to punish. Man cannot escape the power of God and the tricks of the demons—but he is called upon, according to a phrase of Evagre le Pontique, repeated by Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, to become through grace what God is by nature,²⁶ and symbols serve as so many steps on this road to deification.

This kind of mental outlook is difficult for us to grasp today, despite the favor which studies on symbols, myths, and allegories presently enjoy. Of course, it gives evidence of faith, but it also carries another meaning—the search for knowledge, a knowledge analogous to a rebirth. In this way, this symbolic mentality is essentially dynamic in the twelfth century, for it implies a motion, it is located in the order of becoming. Beyond appearances, beyond exteriority, man is drawn into the depths of his being in a motion of destruction and of creation.

26. Evagre le Pontique, *Cant.*, IV, 51, ed. W. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus* (Berlin, 1913), p. 355, quoted by Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *Lettre aux frères du Mont-Dieu*, ed. M. M. Davy (Paris, 1940), No. 108.

THE FIGURATIVE THOUGHT OF THE RENAISSANCE

Attempts to reconstruct the "psychology" of a past era always have a specious side which should properly be mistrusted. Was the "Renaissance man" a visualizer? Arguments for and against this thesis have been found, but nothing can be solved, because it will always be impossible to prove that a phenomenon, even if it is very widespread and completely characteristic of a given period, is symptomatic of a particular psychic constitution of the men of that time. If the writings and the art of the sixteenth century seem to us to include the elements of a complete logic of figurative thought, which would certainly be of interest for the history of intellectual methods, the fact as such must not be translated into terms of the psychology of individuals.

Theoretically, the idea of a logic using metaphors and images instead of universals depends upon a broader question, also debated in the schools and in the treatises since the first codifications of medieval culture: Is logic a descriptive or an instrumental discipline? Or, as it

Translated by Wells F. Chamberlin.

was said then, is it a science or an art? It is a science if its objective is to define the elements, the nature, and the formal conditions of true thought; it is an art (in the old, broad sense of the word) if it helps men in true thinking. But, according to Aristotle, art is concerned with the singular. Strictly speaking, logic would then always be an art, because thought is always "situated" before a problem, and because every problem is, as such, a unique case. To reflect upon the nature of negation, or upon the definition of definition, is to behave as an "artist," as a man who seeks to solve a singular difficulty; science comes only afterward, for it is merely the corpus of the acquired and transmitted truths. In addition, the term "art" designates the whole of the processes or the prescriptions which cover and solve all the possible cases within a given field. Fencing, oneiromancy, poetry, the solving of a type of mathematical problem were "reduced to art" when the way was found to mechanize the exercise completely. Logic "reduced to art" would thus teach the manner of winning disputes infallibly or of discovering all the truths accessible to reasoning.

BACKGROUND

Lully—who died in 1316—came much earlier than the Renaissance. Yet his system of logic is the origin of a tradition which contributed to art and figurative thought in the sixteen century, and the renewal of Lullism in the Renaissance explains in large part the new logic of the image (unless it is the new logic which explains the renewal). These reasons require that Lullism be taken into account here.

Lully's purpose was to codify "the hunt for the middle term," that is, the invention of links which lead, from general and evident premises, to the solution of any problem which is stated. Consequently, this was an "art" in the old sense of the word, and it would serve to prove the truth of Christianity against the infidels. The means resembled what Descartes would call his fourth rule: "in every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted." To do this, Lully prepared lists or tables giving an inventory of the principal categories of subjects, predicates, "instruments," and circumstances, as well as the methods of variation, combination, opposition, amplification, etc. As in games in which one guesses a word with the help of questions to which only "yes" or "no" answers are permitted, Lully prescribed that one should descend from

simple and general terms toward more complex and more precise determinations. The procedure was facilitated by matrixes and systems of concentric discs, which were revolved one within the other in order to exhaust the possible combinations of the symbols written on their circumferences. Consequently it was essentially a classification rather than a method; the verification of each judgment which was proposed by the combinatory game of the "art" was always intuitive. An acquired result never served, as in algebra, as a rule for acquiring the next result. With each step, one had to start from zero.

There is no logic which is so little abstract as this combinatory art of symbols. Intuition, or even visualization, intervenes everywhere and is served by Lully's matrixes and discs. In the course of the operations, it is the only criterion of truth; and the philosophic background, presiding over the choice and the ordering of the elements, is a *speculum mundi* rather than a doctrine. It is a logic of the individual case and of quasispatial representation. It calls for an "art" of the image.

The dialectic of the humanists, the second source of figurative logic in the sixteenth century, intervenes less directly in its genesis. The great antischolastic reaction has often been described—a reaction which caused the subtleties of terminism, today returned to high esteem, to be long forgotten. Humanism brought about, if not the discredit, at least the relative forgetting of the more technical parts of Aristotle's science-logic, in favor of the logic-art constituted by the Topics, the Rhetoric, and the Poetics. Begun by Petrarch, this reversal of direction reaches, toward the end of the century, the positions of the school of Ramus, at the extreme point of "rhetorization." In this context the immense humanistic vogue of the Topics, the discipline of "common-places," was decisive for the fate of the image as an instrument of the intellect. This book formed the transition in Aristotile between the treatises on formal logic and the Rhetoric, and it was almost the only book in the Organon which had a classificatory character. In that sense it was related to Lullism and indeed, along with it, was regularly invoked or understood in the systems of figurative thought.

IMAGE AND IMAGINATION¹

In principle, any attempt at a logic of the image ought to have con-

1. See esp. M. W. Bundy, *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1927); G. Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la*

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flicted with the traditional psychology and physiology, because the "interior senses," the faculties of representation, were considered to be radically distinct from the reason and the intellect, the faculties of the universal. The usual doctrine on this question, derived from Aristotle (On the Soul II. 3), was developed by Avicenna, was naturalized in the Christian world by Albertus Magnus, and was related by physicians since Galen to the theory of the animal spirits. It held that these "spirits," vehicles of the sensations, underwent in the three ventricles of the brain, a kind of step-by-step distillation during which the impression received in the organ was intellectualized by degrees and was finally deposited in the memory, in the depths of the third ventricle. These "semi-material" operations, which always concern the images of singular things, prepare the ground for the intervention of intellect or of reason, faculties entirely foreign to matter and which deal with pure universals. Authors did not agree on the number and the names of the intermediate faculties, which ranged from the "common sense" (synthesis of the sensations coming from different organs, but relative to the same object) to the memory. However, the schema of the three ventricles had a very long life, since we find it again even in a youthful sketch by Leonardo. The idea of a ladder of the operations of "refinement" of the image also survived long after the physiology which supplied it. Taken together, these faculties were often designated under the term "imagination."

The aspect which interests us here, and which has interested many inventive metaphysicians, is semi-materiality. The image is midway between the material object and the pure concept; the imagination, formed of the matter of the animal spirits, is midway between the body and the intellect. Lully suggested the existence of an imaginative soul between the sensitive soul and the rational soul; the Neoplatonists had supposed that a semi-material "vehicle" (analogous to the astral body of the occultists) received influxes from the planets, spoke with the gods during dreams, was modified during our lifetime, according to the character of our thoughts and desires, and thus gave to the soul an imprint which might possibly carry it to hell after death. (The

doctrine du pneuma (Paris and Louvain, 1945); Marian Heitzman, "L'agostinismo avicennizzante di Marsilio Ficino," *Giorn. critico della filosofia ital.*, Vols. XVI and XVII (N.S. III and IV); R. Klein, "L'Imagination comme vêtement de l'âme," *Revue de métaphysique et morale*, 1956.

influence of Origen and of Avicenna produced in the Christian Occident several variants or partial resumptions of these theses, particularly in John Scotus Erigena, Hugh of Saint-Victor, Marsiglio Ficino, and Bruno.)

From this we may deduce that the logic of images could be only a "semi-logic." Two possibilities remain open to it: either to imitate the operations of the intellect with this imperfect material (the visual representation of the singular) or to establish in the service of the intellect an "art" of applied thought. Logic-art is indeed impossible without the imagination—for just as this faculty had to intervene for the "ascent" from sensation to intellect, it is necessary for causing the "descent" or for applying the concept to the sensible object. Giordano Bruno called this particular function of the descending imagination *scrutinium*; it corresponds almost exactly to Kant's *Urteilskraft* ("Judgment").²

Each time that the image, in the Renaissance, tends to be substituted for the concept, for one reason or another (in mnemonic systems, in the philosophy of art, in emblematics, in the "thinking machines" of Giulio Camillo or Bruno), it can be seen that figurative thought is set up as a logic by two methods at the same time; the (imperfect) imitation of the "science" of universals, and the establishment of an "art" parallel to the logic of concepts.

ARTS OF MEMORY³

As early as the practical manuals of antiquity intended for the use of orators, it was apparently admitted that the best way to memorize ideas or words was to associate them with images. Starting with this idea, Cicero, Quintilian, and especially the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* described the fundamental principles of

2. The idea of an imagination-discrimination is at the origin of all theories of taste in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it may be said that through this intermediary Kant's *Critique of Judgment* is related to the psychology of Renaissance Platonism.

3. L. Volkmann, "Ars memorativa," *Jahrbuch der kunsth. Sammlungen in Wien*, N.F. III (1929); Frances A. Yates, "The Cicieronian Art of Memory," in *Medioevo e Rinascimento: Studi in onore di Bruno Nardi* (Florence, 1955), II, 871-903; P. Rossi, "La costruzione delle immagini nei trattati de memoria artificiale del Rinascimento," in *Umanesimo e simbolismo: Atti del IV Convegno di studi umanistici* (Padua, 1958), pp. 161-78.

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mnemonics, which were still applied in the same way in the sixteenth century, with a remarkable persistency. For each point or sentence of his speech the orator imagined a visual symbol attached to the objects or places he could see from his rostrum, arranged in an easily retained order. When he spoke, he would "read" his text by running his eyes over the scene before him. More experienced speakers could give up this support furnished by the locale where they performed and would choose other "places" which they knew by heart and which they were sure they could evoke at the desired moment, after having linked them mentally to arbitrary "images."

The literature of the *Artes Memoriae*, which flourished in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Peter of Ravenna, Romberch, Rosselli), multiplied infinitely the subsidiary rules and the more or less convenient processes, using homonyms or the Aristotelian laws of association of ideas, introducing the rebus, etc.—but the essential element was always the principle of creating a "place" and situating the "images" in it. The series of places recalled the order, and the images evoked the objects.

In theory, memory is assimilated here to imagination, as with the psychologists; but on the other hand, this mnemonics certainly imitates logic, though perhaps in a less evident manner. First of all, the evoking image differs little from the universal or from the word as sign of the universal. This imagined design is a kind of symbol, or as it was called, a "hieroglyph." Vico will even talk of a "universal of the imagination" which he distinguishes from the universal of reason. In addition, the necessary intervention of the place of the images—a characteristic and distinctive feature of ancient mnemonic systems—gives to the evoking element a binomial structure, analogous to that of the logical judgment. The place-image relationship reproduces the subject-predicate relationship. By the same means, the memory can visualize the order or the arrangement, without reifying it; the analogy with the realm of speech is thereby so close and was so well perceived that a mnemonics expert of 1610, J. H. Alsted, wrote: "Therefore, if order is the mother of memory, logic is an art of memory."⁴

Alsted was influenced by Lully and Renaissance mnemonics naturally

4. *Systema mnemonic duplex* (Frankfurt, 1610), quoted by P. Rossi, *op. cit.*, p. 174 n. 32.

reminds us of Lully. Fundamentally it posed the same problems as logic—the problems of combination of elements, and particularly those of classification for the system. Both also have as their primary task the creating, by symbols, a unitary and complete representation of the world. “The tree of sciences” is apparently one of Lully’s inventions, quickly adopted, and with good reason, by the arts of memory. Inversely, any mnemonic device could also serve the Lullians, in order to shorten the tiresome consulting of tables. Rapidly the merger became total—Lully’s art was used as an art of memory, and the symbolism of pure mnemonic arts was carried over into expositions of the “arts of inventing.” This extension is all the more explainable because, according to Augustine’s famous analysis (*Confessions* X. 8, 27), the memory was much more than a depository of representations. Both the container and the content of the mind, memory was the proof of its autogeneration, its productive faculty par excellence. “The art of inventing” naturally found a place here.

DESIGNS AND CONCEPTS⁵

In establishing his parallel between science and art, Aristotle had prepared the way for the theoreticians of figurative thought. Indeed, he discovered a profound analogy of structure between these two activities of the mind. According to him, art always proceeded by distinct stages: first, “conception,” then “execution.” (Their fusion today, even outside the influence of Alain, is a common truth, although a recent one, going back three centuries at most.) Conception, or “creation of the concept,” belonged to the order of science, and for many theoreticians of letters and the plastic arts, it was the only thing which counted. According to them, a Raphael without hands would still have been a great artist; Francisco de Hollanda even said, about 1545, that a painter who “imagines” well cannot be a bad painter.⁶ If a master left a work unfinished because he was unable to attain the ideal “conceived” in his mind, that did not appear to be a defect, but a merit,

5. See esp. E. Panofsky, *Idea* (“Vorträge der Bibl. Warburg,” Vol. V [Leipzig, 1924]); also L. Volkman, *Bilderschriften der Renaissance* (Leipzig, 1923); K. Giehlow, “Die Hieroglyphenkunde des Humanismus,” *Jahrbuch der kunsth. Samml. d. allerh. Kaiserhauses*, Vol. XXXII (1915); E. Gombrich, “Icones symbolicae,” *Journal of the Warburg Inst.*, Vol. XI (1948).

6. Francisco de Hollanda, *Four Dialogues on Painting*, trans. Aubrey Bell (Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 64.

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a proof of the excellence of the concept. (It was by this turn that the sixteenth century became accustomed to enjoying the unfinished in art.)⁷ Since this completely interior creation is, in principle, indifferent to the manner in which it is "expressed"—in colors, volumes, or words—it follows that a man who possesses the essence of any art possesses all the others, at least virtually. Here again we find one of the Renaissance axioms which leaves today's aesthetician or art critic perplexed, though in its time often stated and illustrated triumphantly by the example of Michelangelo. Francisco de Hollanda said: "Indeed I sometimes think and imagine that I can find among men but one art or science, that of drawing or painting. . . ."⁸ Sixty years later, another painter, Federico Zuccaro, wrote a very curious book to defend this thesis.

The "concept," which is the core of all art, is most often assimilated to a kind of interior design. The ambiguity of the Italian *disegno* (English "design") has long been noted. Its two meanings were rendered in French by the related words *dessin* and *dessein* ("design" in the sense of "sketch" and "design" in the sense of "scheme"); the sketch or *dessin* exists only to "designate," operating as a function of the mind's intention. In general, for the Renaissance, to think is to project, and to project is to spatialize: *deviser* ("project") is of the same family as *deviser* ("to discuss," "to speak") and *devis* ("plan" or "specification"; compare Italian *divisare*, English "to devise")—terms which presuppose that the time (that is the future) and the action to be executed (that is the idea) may be cut into pieces or "divided" like a cake. After 1500, artists noted proudly that in Greek *graphein* meant both to sketch (*dessin*) and to write, and about the same time the rebus (one of Leonardo's favorite pastimes) and hieroglyphic pictography were assiduously cultivated.

The assimilation of the concept to an interior design or sketch is not entirely new in the sixteenth century. In particular we may cite John Scotus Erigena, for whom every "definition" traces the contour of a universal, and who considers the category of *place* in Aristotle as applying solely to the quasi-extension in which ideas are "sketched."

7. A. Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique* (Paris, 1960), pp. 327-34.

8. Francisco de Hollanda, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

In the Middle Age, Platonic ideas are often presented as little images, the true models of the things which participate in them. But the Renaissance, particularly in its theory of art, exploits the analogy with inexorable tenacity. Vassari, in the introduction to his famous *Lives* of the painters (1550), defined design by using as his source a sentence in which Aristotle described the formation of the abstract concept, starting from the sensation.⁹ The image-type of a thing, retained by the memory when one has seen many objects of the same kind, is already a kind of plastic abstraction. There is no distinction between the man of learning and the painter who "possesses" the design of the human body, that is, who knows how to reproduce it without a model. Any difference between the mnemonic image and the universal is simply ignored by J. Huarte: "Now it is necessary to know that the arts and sciences studied by men are only images and figures which their minds have produced in their memories, and which represent vividly the condition and natural composition of the subject considered by the science which man wants to learn."¹⁰ This resembles the dream of an entirely intuitive science, with no universals other than image-types.

Similar examples can be found everywhere. Scaliger, in his *Poetics* (1581), the basic manual for a whole century, defined, as John Scotus Erigena did, the figures of style by the "contours" which words-design

9. "For the design, which proceeds from the intellect, extracts from several objects a universal judgment, similar to a form or an idea of all the objects of nature, which is quite regular; from this it results that it recognizes . . . the proportion of the whole with the parts, and of the parts among themselves and with the whole. And of this knowledge is born a certain judgment formed about this thing in the mind; and, when expressed by the hands, this judgment is called design" (*Vite*, ed. Milanesi, I, 168 ff.; English based on the author's French translation of the passage. Cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II. 19. 100a 4-13: "So out of sense-perception comes to be what we call memory, and out of frequently repeated memories of the same thing develops experience; for a number of memories constituted a single experience. From experience again—i.e., from the universal now stabilized in its entirety within the soul, the one beside the many which is a high identity with them all—originate the skill of the craftsman and the knowledge of the man of science, skill in the sphere of coming to be and science in the sphere of being" (G. R. G. Mure [trans.], *Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon [New York: Random House, 1941], p. 185.). Also *Metaphysics* I. 1.981a 5-7: "Now art arises from many notions gained by experience one universal judgment about a class of objects is produced" (W. D. Ross [trans.], *Basic Works*, p. 689).

10. *Examen de ingenios* (1578). English from the French *Examen des esprits pour les sciences* (1645), pp. 7-8.

(III, 30). On the walls of the City of the Sun, Campanella imagined paintings which would teach all the sciences, without commentaries. In 1607 the painter-theoretician Federico Zuccaro developed a complete epistemology of design (*disegno*), conceived according to the Thomistic doctrine of universals but adorned with Platonic elements. Here, the internal design (*disegno interno*) replaces the pure concept, and the imagination, mother of *concetti*, is substituted for the possible intellect of the scholastics. Giordano Bruno is representative here as he often is elsewhere of the final step of the evolution—according to him, to think is at the same time to paint and to invent, like the poets. Notions are images and fictions. But in his statement, emphasis is changed: "The first and principal painter is the faculty of *Phantasia* [imagination], and the first and principal poet is the impulsion or the effort of the fresh enthusiasm of meditation which drives us by a divine or seemingly divine inspiration to express suitably something we have conceived. Both have the same immediate source—thus philosophers are, after a fashion, painters and poets, poets are painters and philosophers, and painters are philosophers and poets . . . for a man who does not know how to paint and feign is no philosopher."¹¹ The pure notion belongs to the philosopher, the *disegno*-project (the conception, the "plan") to the painter, the expression to the poet; but the essential element of the classic thesis, the distinction between conceiving and expressing, is formally rejected here.

If the image can thus be a universal—the first condition of a logic of figurative thought—this is, in the eyes of the Neoplatonists, by virtue of a more general psychological background: belief in the possibility of an intellectual intuition. Renaissance symbols are often supra-intelligible mysteries, reduced to an image.¹² The religious respect with which hieroglyphs were regarded is one proof of this (they were considered to be a symbolic pictography which summed up all the "poetic theology" of the ancient wise men). Sixteenth century Lullism became "modern" by adopting occult symbols, particularly astrological ones; and, under the guise of an apocryphal writing, Lully was related to the

11. G. Bruno, *Opera latina* (Ediz. Nazionale), II, No. 2, 133-34.

12. E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (New Haven, 1958). It is true that the writer denies any link between intellectual intuition and the visualization in the symbolism; cf. however, the quotation from Ficino in the lines below.

Christian cabalo. Figurative thought sometimes was held to be superior to speech. "The Egyptian priests, to signify the divine mysteries, did not use the alphabet's tiny characters but the complete figures of plants, trees, and animals, because God's knowledge of things is not like a discourse on them, but like the simple, stable form of the thing."¹³

THE SYMBOL AS STATEMENT¹⁴

The theory of emblems and of similar forms of expression (reverse sides of medals, the language of flowers and colors, festival allegories, etc.) is another step in the direction of the complete model of logic. The image of the mnemonic art had been linked to the "interior senses"; the design ("sketch") was already, in principle, a concept and a universal, but the emblem is a declaration or judgment. Among the many variants of these speaking symbols, the most revealing is the *impresa*, the personal emblem of a gentleman or of a literary man. Generally it was an image associated with a short maxim in such a way that the two elements represented together by metaphor a characteristic or an intention of the bearer. The classic example is the *impresa* of the Emperor Charles V—the columns of Hercules with the motto *Plus Outre*.¹⁵ (On the other hand, in a true emblem, a maxim was not necessarily tied to the image, and the sense expressed was a general truth of a philosophic or moral order. Consequently the structure of the symbol was much simpler.)

According to an undoubtedly rather simplified account by Giovio in 1550, the fashion of the *impresa* probably spread in Italy after the first French invasion in 1494. It had a double root—military or chevaleresque and worldly or poetic. Later, around 1570, after Giovio and his many imitators, the rules of the game became complicated and the

13. Marsilius Ficinus, *Comment. Plotinus, on Enneade V*. 8,6.

14. In addition to the works by Volkmann, Giehlow, and Gombrich, cited in n. 5 above, see esp. Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery* (2 vols.; London: Warburg Institute, 1939-1947); and R. Klein, "L'Expression figurée et les *impreses*," *Bibl. d'humanisme et Renaissance*, Vol. XIX (1957).

15. M. Bataillon has recently shown that the meaning of this symbol was originally purely moral: the Emperor "went farther" than Hercules, the hero who traditionally represented the virtues of rulers. The application to the possessions in America was added after the fact. It should be noted that an *impresa* which would have done no more than to express flatly a datum of political geography would have been felt to be defective, because it would have lacked the essential element, the metaphor.

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custom grew academic and pedantic. In the early seventeenth century, the instrument was ready, the rules fixed, the classification of symbols determined. This preparatory phase ended with the two voluminous publications of Biralli and Hercole Tasso, and people could begin using the *impresa* for edification, political propaganda, or pedagogy, with a virtuosity which soon became quite brilliant. This development changed its character radically.

In the meantime, the prefaces of the collections of examples had furnished the elements of a logic. The *imprese* were means of expression and it was necessary first of all to define them as such, classifying them along with the gestures, with words and with alphabetical or pictographical writing. In this way their distinctive feature was discovered: they are neither conventional signs nor more or less schematic imitations of the designated object, but "indications," which translate one idea by means of another: figures, "veils." Their structure was itself complex and veiled: first there was the message, the idea in the raw state—for example, "I have chosen the love which kills me." Next the metaphor ("comparison" or "concept"), which might be rendered either by a drawing, by words, or by composite forms; in our example, this could be the moth flying toward the flame. Finally comes the "covering," that is, the design and the maxim, which had to be associated in such a way that neither of the two elements was completely clear without the other. When this is done, the insect and the candle will be shown, accompanied by the words, "I know it well."

On this practically constant structural canvas, theoreticians embroidered with remarkable subtlety. The different definitions and rules of the *impresa* (each writer proposed his own system) very nearly permit us, today, to distinguish currents and schools. We might say, in a general way, that on the one hand were the "logicians," who made the art of the *impresa* a copy of the forms of demonstrative thought, while on the other hand are the "artists," who discover in the *impresa* the structure of the work of art as conceived by Aristotle. Among the "logicians" the prevailing tendency was sometimes toward an assimilation of the whole to a simple universal; then the essential role of the comparison was juggled into the definition, and the comparison was reduced to the rank of a simple instrument (Bargali, Montalto) and the discursive character of the metaphor was attenuated as much as possible: for example, the use of a verb in a personal form was not allowed in the

maxim. Other logicians, however, related the *impresa* to the judgment (example: a yoke with the motto *soave*, "patiently"). For them, the initial element is not the statement of the bearer, the bare idea, but the "resemblance" between this idea and the image which expresses it (Contile). There were also *imprese* treated as syllogisms (an empty escutcheon with the maxim: "What I desire is not mortal." A number of writers at the end of the century even furnish the outline of a Topics of an "art of inventing" the *impresa* (especially Caburacci). All of Aristotle's *Organon* was provided with an emblematic duplicate.

On the other hand, the artists of the *impresa* were particularly interested in the relationship between the two perceptible elements, the design and the maxim. For these "artists," the definitions themselves may often contain a compendium of rules, in order to emphasize that the essence of the *impresa* lies solely in its construction. They refine freely upon an organicist analogy; according to Alessandro Farra, the *impresa* had an intellect, a rational soul, a fantastic spirit or body, a temperament or sensitive quality, and matter—which is, according to the Neoplatonic philosophy of Florence, the whole structure of man.

In reality there was a wide area of agreement here between the "artists" and the "logicians." For both, the *impresa* was the "embodiment" of a concept, and both admitted that this embodiment could take place only by virtue of "veils." It matters little where the emphasis is placed. For the former, it is on form and means; for the latter, on the meaning conveyed. Theoreticians of the century always considered the conception-expression duality as the common essence of discourse and of art, which are two variants of an identical function of mind—the conception and translation of an idea. Art is always discourse, because the work must be wholly conceived before being realized; and discourse is always art, because it is always addressed to a task which is singular, and because the imagination is the necessary intermediary between the universal which has been thought and the singular to which it applies. Precisely like the significant design, word and discourse are only image, metaphor, and veil.

THE SYSTEMS¹⁶

All these elements of a new logic come together in the sixteenth cen-

16. We are using the excellent work by Cesare Vasoli, "Umanesimo e simbologia nei primi scritti lulliani e mnemotecnici del Bruno," in *Umanesimo e simbolismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-304. Other material in our article is referred to in n. 1 above.

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ture in the common background of a transformed Lullism. The first syntheses were developed around 1530. Lavinheta turned Lullism into a non-visual mnemonics; Cornelius Agrippa brought it close to the topic-rhetoric of the humanists; Giulio Camillo, also starting from topics, grafted on it an emblematics of his own invention and finally made of it a quasi-Lullian *speculum mundi*. Later, at the end of the century, Bruno published his disturbing series of Latin writings, which have been described as emblemized memory arts, serving as a support for a Lullism endowed with an entirely new metaphysical import. In 1615 Nostitz, a German writer, cited as his authorities Lully, Ramus, and Bruno.¹⁷

The possibility of these syntheses rests on at least two tacit methodological postulates: the existence of key-images for the explanation of the world, and the parallelism between the physical or metaphysical structure of the cosmos and the systematic inventory of the arguments or knowledge of an "art" of the Lullian type. These convenient hypotheses become evident in Giulio Camillo's *Teatro*, a virtual panorama of all that can be known. It was a sort of imaginary Coliseum filled with symbolic representations, divided according to an astrological scheme of the seven planets and their "domains" of influence, and ordered with as much care, although with more pedantry, than the *Divine Comedy*; at each intersection or nodal point, it showed a mythological figure or image whose symbol-value was more or less fixed in advance by the current Neoplatonic exegesis. Camillo, originally a professor of rhetoric, had first intended only to facilitate the exercise of memory. To his "artificial brain" (*mens quaedam fabrefacta*) he attributed extraordinary pedagogical powers, and his charlatan ways gave him a certain measure of success, especially at the court of Francis I.

Fundamentally, the postulates of the new Lullists resulted in a conception of the world which long operated as a counterweight to the mechanistic view of the seventeenth-century physicists. This "realism" of symbols (in the sense in which people talked of the "realism" of universals) required a metaphysics and a psychology, both developed by Giordano Bruno, on a base which was really older.

Its central theme is the active power of forms as forms, in nature and in the mind. "Idea, imitation, representation, designation, notation—

17. Vasoli, *op. cit.*, p. 269, n. 50.

there is the whole action of God, of nature, and of the mind," said Bruno.¹⁸ God creates or conceives the Platonistic Ideas in his mind; nature "imitates" them in producing its forms; the human mind takes the representations and uses them to rise to things by "designation" and to Ideas by "notation." Outside this influx of one image on another, of this "imitation" of one image by another, nothing exists, and nothing happens. There is no action whatsoever which has a different character. "Forms, effigies, signs, are like the vehicles and chains by virtue of which the gifts of the upper world emanate, proceed, introduce themselves (into matter) and are conceived, contained, and preserved (in the mind)."¹⁹

Commentary is easy: the "forms" are the Ideas of Plato, the "effigies" are Nature, and the "signs" are the tools of the mind; in ensemble, they constitute a chain of figures bound together, almost magically, and imitating each other. From the world of Ideas (the Intellect of God) "emanate" and "proceed" images "to introduce themselves" into matter; the mind welcomes them in order to "conceive" them by forming the figured universal; it "contains" them in interior operations and "conserves" them in memory, according to the traditional psychophysiology.

The background of this physics and this gnosiology is quite evidently sympathetic magic, that is, the postulate that the resemblance or the affinity between forms and figures can be an active force. Bruno and his predecessors or immediate models on this point, Marsiglio Ficino and Roger Bacon, were interested in magic and in the adjacent areas; the connection was strengthened by the fact that Raymond Lully had been credited by tradition and legend with an advanced interest in magic. And it was also through the intermediary of magic that the transition from metaphysics to the psychology of figurative thought was worked. The infrequently cited but very important little book, in which Bruno founded at the same time a psychology of magic and a magical interpretation of art and rhetoric, bore the title, *On Chains in General*, and contained a classification of the sympathetic relations of form to form.

The usual theories of art, of symbol, and of discussion all asserted that the essential or even unique activity of the mind was to conceive ideas in order to realize them or express them later. As long as these two

18. *Opera latina*, II, 3, 89.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

phases remained separate, there could be no true philosophy of figurative thought, expression—whether an arbitrary convention or a mechanical reproduction—being essentially foreign to the idea. The hypothesis permitted only the discovery that any expression is always veiled, because there is no means of communicating pure thought, of “showing” ideas directly. But the postulates of the renewed Lullian systems required one more step: the image-symbol, with its double physical and logical function, could no longer be arbitrary. It was therefore necessary to redefine the imagination itself, according to the necessities of a spiritualistic and magical cosmology. For Bruno, this faculty became synonymous with the creative power of the mind; thus mathematical infinity, which traditionally was held to be a product of reason, appeared to him as a discovery of the imaginative power.

The various more or less Lullian “machines” which Bruno proposes to his readers to strengthen their memories and to let them reason on anything at all are much less interesting than the explanations of method with he gives along with them. Often, these little treatises are only collections of methodological aphorisms or commentated symbols—it is up to the learner to figure them out in order to make good use of them. Most of these figures serve to illustrate the anthropology and psychology of the system to which they are integrated. The first sign, the “field,” signifies the imagination and corresponds to the “place” in which, according to the mnemonics experts, the figures are inscribed. But the metaphor of the field is an improper one, because it presents the imagination as passive, whereas on the contrary it is the very principle of the mind’s fertility; and Bruno corrects himself by defining it as a matrix, as an “inexhaustible womb” of form-ideas.

The book of the *Thirty Signs* adds other images which have to do with the very foundation of the thinking machine: the Tree (derivation or ramification of concepts and science); the Chain (the ladder of images or forms between the Idea and the representation in the memory); Zeuxis or the Painter (visual imagination which frees the archetype or universal from the experience of the multiple;²⁰ Phidias or the Sculptor (creative imagination which removes the accidental and thus

20. The name of the sign is justified by an anecdote of Cicero and Pliny: Zeuxis, unable to find a beautiful enough model for Venus, combined the perfections of the five most beautiful girls of Crotona. It was customary to use this story to illustrate the idealizing power of art “which surpasses nature.”

risers from the raw datum, similar to the block of marble, to the Idea, which is the Model); Daedalus or the Craftsman (invention of technical processes of the Lullian art, the artifices of the investigator). This borrowing of symbols from the fine arts was not fortuitous. Bruno carried further than anyone else the assimilation of thought to artistic activity. Fundamentally in his system, reasoning reason is inclosed in the imagination. It should be repeated that this artistic activity is at the same time, and almost for the first time, conceived by him in terms acceptable to us, as a fusion of thinking and doing. Thus the *Sign of Signs* enumerates the "objects" of the imagination: light, that is, the Intellect-Sun, at the same time the supernatural source and "matter" of knowledge ("the eye which sees itself" according to the well-known formula); color or extended light, that is, nature; figure or contour, signifying, as with the precursors cited above, the science of universals; finally, relief or volume, the synthesis of lighting, color, and design. This is philosophy as a realization of learning. Nothing is more revealing than this passage, which Vasoli has correctly emphasized. For Bruno, the whole ensemble of the mind's activity is, in the final analysis, the creation of a picture: light, color, contour, and relief. One could go no further in striving to justify figurative thought in terms of figurative thought. Forty years later, Cartesianism and physical mechanism will have changed everything. With equal strictness and temerity, it will have formulated a diametrically opposed conception of intellectual activity.

BOOK REVIEWS

Henri Irénée Marrou

A COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL ATLASES

For the past fifteen or sixteen centuries Western civilization has been a civilization of books, and, since Gutenberg, a civilization of printed books. At this moment we are taking part in a veritable cultural mutation: at the same time as mechanical recording processes—records, magnetic tape, radio, television—are restoring to the human voice that presence, that direct impact, that leading role which it has not known since classical antiquity, the ever widening and increasingly perfected techniques of pictorial reproduction accustom us more each day to using illustrated documents as food for, and instruments of, thought.

We can no longer picture the historical past without accompanying it by its projection in space. The event does not appear to us to be rendered completely real except when situated in its location on this earth which the speed of, and familiarity with, travel have reduced for all time to the proportions of a "small planet." On the other hand, even in the elaboration of this history, how important is the role of monuments of all kinds, illustrated or not, which help us to reconstruct the life of men of former times, the milieu of their civilization, their political and social organization, their thought, their problems!

Translated by William J. Harrison.

The attention given to this category of documents appears to me as one of the specific traits of this "new historical spirit" by which our generation does itself honor. At the time of Fustel de Coulanges it was said: "History is made with texts." We have learned, in the meantime, to add, with the school of Lucien Febvre: Yes, certainly! but also with all that can be interpreted as a sign, whether it be a landscape, a ruin, a portrait, or an artifact, even if this belonged to the most humble and familiar aspect of life.

In this new perspective one must express satisfaction at having seen the appearance, in the course of recent years, of several historical atlases, analogous as to concept and presentation, which, as distinct from our old classic atlases, are not limited to a series of maps but add to this an abundant photographic documentation of sites and monuments. The ensemble, with its discreet but skilful commentary, deserves to hold the attention, not merely of specialists, teachers, and students, but of the more general public, the ordinary man concerned with adding to and deepening his culture.

Their publication constitutes a remarkable example of international collaboration and effort to surmount the cultural isolation which results from the multiplicity of languages. Prepared by Dutch scholars on behalf of the publishing house of Elzevier by whom they were published with a care and quality in keeping with its splendid reputation, our atlases saw their Dutch edition rapidly followed by Nelson's English translation, then German and French editions by various workers, all reproducing the perfectly executed illustrations and the often ingenious page-setting of the Dutch original.

The series opened with the *Atlas of Western Civilisation* by Father F. van der Meer, professor of archeology and of art history at the Catholic University of Nijmegen. This was followed by the *Atlas of the Bible* by R. P. L. H. Grollenberg, a Dominican who was able to avail himself of the works accumulated by the Bible School of Jerusalem. This reviewer may be permitted to manifest a particular interest in the third, the *Atlas of the Early Christian World*, work of the same F. van der Meer in collaboration with his colleague at Nijmegen, the celebrated philologist Melle Christine Mehrmann. Finally the *Atlas of the Classical World*, devoted to Greek and Roman antiquity, has just appeared, by A. A. A. van der Heyden (the sigla *Hist. Drs.* which follows his name signifies *doctorandus*, future doctor of history, student prepar-

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ing his doctorate), with the collaboration of H. H. Scullard of King's College, London. This last-born is to me the least welcome in the series. It is somewhat hastily prepared, a little confused, and, as it were, overwhelmed by the wealth of its subject. The others, however, are deserving of every praise.

First of all, there are the maps. As is usual, they will serve in the first instance for the geographical locating of which we have spoken. If, as a historian of Christianity, I meet in the course of a study of the Arian heresy such personages, even of secondary importance, as Secundus of Ptolemais or Athanasius of Anazarbe, my mind will be at ease only after fixing the location of their episcopal sees on a map of Cyrenaica or Silesia. But maps can be made to tell infinitely more; thus, in his first *Atlas*, M. van der Meer has placed two maps of Central Europe side by side: that of the principal monuments of the Baroque age and that of the centers of spiritual radiance where the art of that age found its principles and its inspiration. Or again: the *Atlas of the Bible*, making use of a suggestion by P. R. de Vaux, superimposes the outline of the migrations of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as it appears from the records of Genesis, on a map showing the distribution of rainfall in Palestine. The comparison makes evident a remarkable fact: these migrations take place in the steppe zone, between the desert proper and the region of Mediterranean cultivation; thus, these Patriarchs were breeders of small livestock, men of customs and mental categories very different both from the non-migrants and from the true camel-herding nomads: hence, all the consequences which may be drawn from this first observation.

Still concerning the *Atlas of the Bible*, I am grateful to it for having systematically chosen a representation of the relief by contour lines as background to the maps. Too frequently historical atlases are content to give an indication, sometimes inaccurate, of the watercourses and to color the background in terms of political or administrative divisions. It is not good to separate physical geography from history; the events of the latter should be situated, not in an abstract space, but on the rugged surface of our planet! The development of the wars of the Roman Republic cannot be clearly understood if one does not have the means of taking into account the twisted outline of the Apennines.

Together with the maps, we can consider the pictorial documentation. It will be recalled that Renal saw the countryside of Galilee as a fifth

Gospel, so to speak. And it is quite true that these pictures of Palestine help one to penetrate the biblical texts to which they relate (the use of aerial photography, intelligently annotated, permits an infinite broadening of perspectives). Similarly evocative is the monumental setting: the illustration allows the reader to grasp the remarkable, and, on more than one occasion, singularly dramatic, situation of the people of Israel, caught as though in pincers between the two great civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The history of plastic arts is much more than a mere out-of-text illustration of history; it is an integral and essential part of it. Through the medium of iconography and plastic values a whole civilization expresses itself, with its concept of the world and of life, its *Lebens- und Weltanschauung*. If the *Atlas of Western Civilisation* and the *Atlas of the Classical World* lead the reader through a generally familiar world, the early Christian art will be a revelation for many, specialists excepted. This is an art too long neglected and often still disregarded. At first glance and for want of initiation, more than one art lover would risk leaving it at that (he need not be negligent or moved by unkind prejudices; it would be enough that he be warped by too strictly classical a training and taste); at first glance, I say, this art, that of the catacombs, basilicas, sarcophagi, and mosaics, appears to present nothing new, formally speaking. It appears, still at first glance, to be a simple heritage, impoverished and often deformed by lack of skill, of the great Hellenic art and its Hellenistic and Roman extensions. In fact, and as one gains a better understanding of it, Paleo-Christian art is revealed as a major example of that curious phenomenon described by Spengler under the rather pedantic name "pseudo-morphosis": the Christians of the earliest periods were successful in containing the new wine, the pure spirit of their young faith, in the old bottle of traditional form. Learning thus to discern original resonances in an art which at first gives a banal and crude impression of decadence is not the least profit which can be drawn from this study.

Such art is not, of course, easily accessible and one can appreciate the importance of finding these relics accompanied by an authoritative commentary. We could not have better guides than these two erudite professors of Nijmegen who are authorities in the realm of early Christianity. It is good to know that van der Meer is the author of one of the most penetrating studies ever devoted to the difficult subject of Paleo-

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Christian art. Unfortunately, the enjoyment of his fine book, *The Oldest Face of Christ*, has been available outside his own country only to those who are acquainted with the Dutch language. By these, incidentally, he is deemed among the best of living authors. It is very fortunate that the essence of his experience be brought within the grasp of the European public.

However, these two authors are not merely supremely competent scholars; they are also humanists, true heirs to the great and fertile tradition of Christian humanism. They have not been content with enabling the reader to draw the most profit from their ingeniously elaborated maps, by their annotations and by the choice, also the subject of long deliberation, of relics which follow each other before our eyes—the famous stele of Si-ngan-fou is there, on the next to last page, to remind us that the Christian upheaval, having left Palestine, had not only reached the extreme end of the Celtic world in the West but had also penetrated as far as China, across the whole breadth of Asia. Rather, at times they have willingly yielded the floor to those other great humanists, their predecessors, the Fathers of the Church. We find here an anthology, as it were, of the most significant contemporary texts, calculated to re-create that Christian world, the material traces of which are presented to us in other ways. One does not tire of turning from the pictures to the text and vice versa. To whoever glances through them, but above all to whoever uses them at length (for more than one reading is necessary to exhaust their riches), such atlases will reveal themselves as marvelous instruments of culture.

Notes on the Contributors

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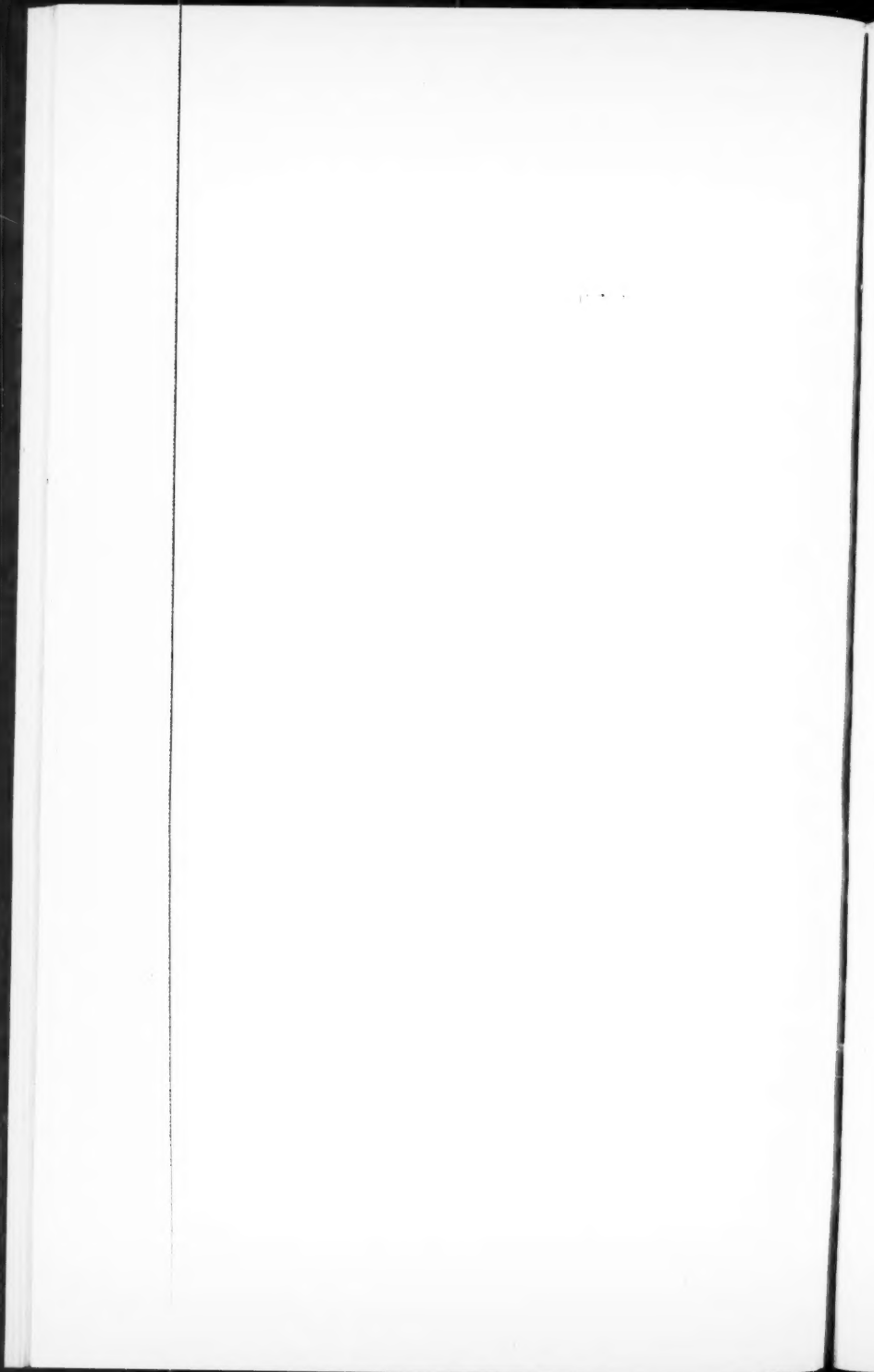
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